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ABSTRACT

This boxed set includes eight booklets of home activities for early intervention for young children with developmental delays. The first book provides an introduction to the program and its implementation, lists 23 resources, describes a videotape which supplements the booklets, and includes a glossary. Book 2 covers how to select goals for the individual child and help the child achieve them in a family context. Book 3 covers language learning at preverbal and verbal levels, approaching the topic in the context of social interaction. Book 4 covers skills involving the large muscles of the body. Book 5 emphasizes fine motor skills and problem-solving, as well as the development of the concepts of color, shape, and size. Book 6 focuses on receptive language skills. Book 7 looks at personal and social skills including play, independent eating, dressing, and grooming. The last book presents a series of checklists for assessing progress and setting objectives. (PB)

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SMALL STEPS

AN EARLY INTERVENTION PROGRAM FOR CHILDREN WITH DEVELOPMENTAL DELAYS

Moira Pieterse and Robin Treloar
with Sue Cairns, Diana Uther and Erica Brar

Macquarie University Sydney

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Book 1 Introduction to Small Steps

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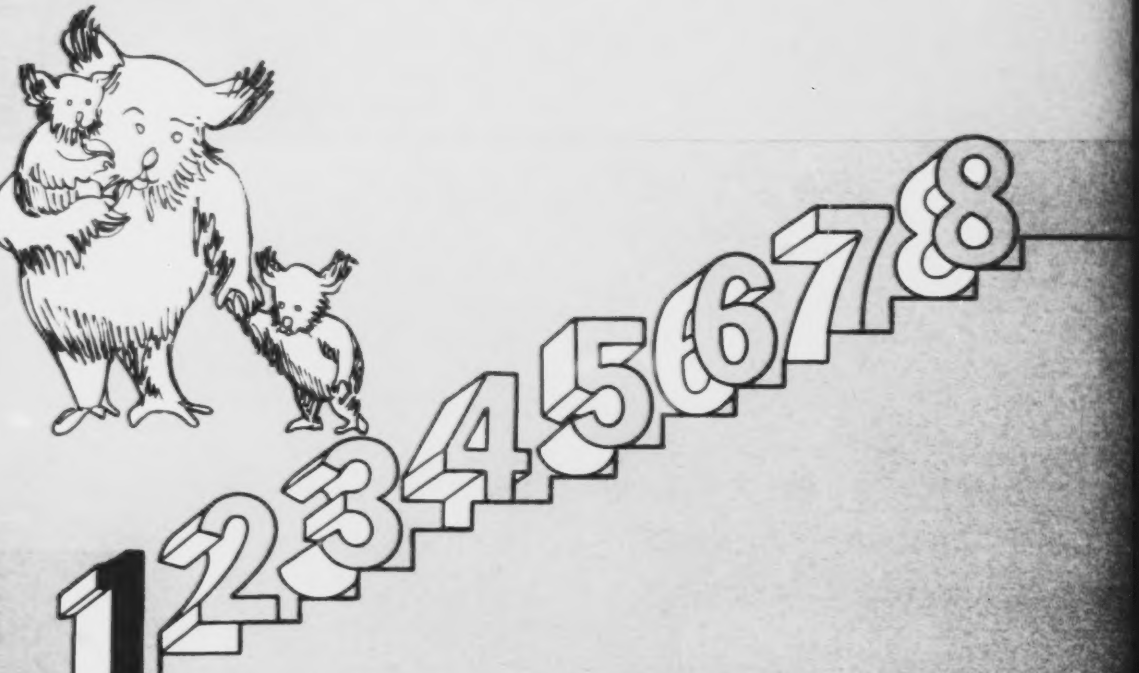

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Small Steps
is dedicated to
the children of the
Down's Syndrome Program
at Macquarie University,
and to their families,

and, most especially, to

Suzy Gordon
Elisabeth McGlinchey
Myfanwy Thomas
Jillian Adams
Kelly Muras
Kate McCarrigle
and
Esther Surjadi

Foreword

Remarkable progress has been made in the education of young children with intellectual disability. The majority now enjoy lifestyles far superior to what would have been the case two decades ago. Their parents or caregivers recognise their needs for love, attention and stimulation; they accept that these children, like other children, can benefit from school and a normal range of social and recreational experiences. One consequence has been a marked drop in the numbers of children placed in institutions or other forms of out-of-home care.

These advances represent one of the success stories of the last quarter century. But they were hard won and resulted only from concentrated efforts by parents, professionals and advocacy groups. A significant contribution has been made by specialised units such as the Down's Syndrome Program at Macquarie University, which has since 1974 been providing a range of teaching and advisory services for children with Down's Syndrome and their parents. This program has been extremely influential in establishing a model for parent support and teaching and is perhaps best known for this. However, a significant factor in its success has been the development and production of a series of carefully constructed teaching programs and materials for use by parents and professionals. Most of these are in widespread use both in Australia and abroad. The latest of these is *Small Steps*.

Small Steps is a program to aid in the teaching of young intellectually disabled children. It is derived from a fusion of considerable teaching experience, knowledge of contemporary research on how children learn, and careful trialling. It is aimed primarily at parents, who are so often skilled and sensitive natural teachers. It assumes no prior knowledge of child development or formal teacher training, and uses simple, everyday language in preference to jargon. The optional audiovisual tapes provide an attractive illustration and commentary on the methods.

I believe that *Small Steps* will add significantly to the resources available to parents, caregivers and professionals, and will emulate the widespread use and success of its forerunners, *The Macquarie Program for Developmentally Delayed Children* and *T.E.L.L. — Teach Early Language for Living: A Communication Program*. All concerned — Moira Pieterse and Robin Treloar and their co-workers, the teachers within the Down's Syndrome Program, the parents and above all the children whose efforts and co-operation have been so important — are to be commended for this first-class project.

James Ward
Professor of Education
and Director of the
Special Education Centre
Macquarie University

The Authors

Moira Pieterse is a lecturer in education at Macquarie University. She has directed the Macquarie University Down's Syndrome Program since its inception in 1974. She has been closely involved in the dissemination of information about early intervention both in Australia and overseas. She was instrumental in establishing the *Small Steps* project and has overseen its progress.

Robin Treloar taught in the Down's Syndrome Program from 1979 to 1983. She was teacher in charge from 1981. She has been involved in the *Small Steps* project since its inception, writing and/or editing the text and compiling the manuscript. She has also been involved in tertiary and in-service education and works as a private consultant to schools, pre-schools and families.

Diana Uther and Erica Brar prepared the gross motor section (Book 4) of *Small Steps*. Both have worked with the Macquarie Program. They are physiotherapists with extensive experience with young children with disabilities.

Sue Cairns was the teacher in charge at the Down's Syndrome Program from 1975 to 1980. She established an early intervention program in Hong Kong, based on the Macquarie Program, and has worked in tertiary education, in-service education and private practice. She was joint author with Moira Pieterse of *T.E.L.L. — A Communication Program*. She has been a consultant to the *Small Steps* project.

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Acknowledgments

Many people have helped us to complete this project — some through direct and practical assistance, and others through their teaching and inspiration.

The parents and children within the Down's Syndrome Program at Macquarie University have contributed at many levels. We thank them for their co-operation and participation in the creation of the videotape programs and for their contributions to the text. We thank them, too, for helping us to make sense of theory and for showing us what works and what doesn't. Each parent and each child made a unique contribution to the program and to our understanding.

Many teachers who worked within the program have contributed to this project. Susan Wade, Rosemary Morrison, Phillippa Bragg, Beth Facer and Jeanne Britz appear in the videotape programs; we thank them for their advice and support and for their patience in the face of disruptions to their routines. Others to whom we owe thanks include Sandra Leonard, Betty Hook, Brian Pirani, Janet Haenke and Antje Siefken.

Geoff Batley joins us in thanking those who contributed to the making of the videotape programs, both through technical assistance and through sharing their thoughts and experiences on camera. Our special thanks go to the families within the program, and to residents of Galston and Arcadia, who graciously allowed us to film within their homes. Geoff's own contribution goes well beyond his time and professional expertise. We thank him for his constructive involvement throughout this project.

To Professor Bernie Thorley, for his role in the establishment of the Down's Syndrome Program, and to Professor James Ward for his continuing support, we extend our appreciation.

Lea Maher read the manuscript of the gross motor section (Book 4) and gave valuable advice.

Our thanks go to Patrice Baldwin and to the clerical staff of the School of Education at Macquarie University, particularly to Lucy Kelly and Edith Lasak for typing the manuscript.

Lynn Gemmell edited the manuscript with patience and good humour. Out of chaos she created order, and it has been a pleasure to work with her. Thanks, too, to Adrian Clayton for his perseverence.

To our families, particularly the Pieterse family, the Treloar family and Graham Williams — our heartfelt thanks for your ongoing interest and encouragement.

Moira Pieterse
Robin Treloar

CHAPTER 1

What is *Small Steps*?

Small Steps is an early intervention program for developmentally delayed children, up to the developmental age of four years. Early intervention means starting as early as possible to help disabled children to reach their full potential.

Small Steps is addressed to parents of developmentally delayed children. It gives practical guidelines for teaching a child in the home environment. It recognises the parents as the most important teachers of the child. It could also be used by teachers, therapists and students.

Small Steps is comprehensive not only in the scope of its curriculum, but in its approach to the subject of *how to teach*. The basic principles are there, of course, but so are the specific practical suggestions — hundreds of them — based on years of direct experience, and on what parents say about what works for them.

Small Steps can be used flexibly — as a resource for occasional 'dipping in' by the experienced teacher, or as a complete do-it-yourself guide for the novice. It is an Australian product reflecting Australian conditions.

WHAT IS THE BASIS FOR *SMALL STEPS*?

Small Steps is closely based on the Macquarie Program for Developmentally Delayed Children. This is the program material developed in the Down's Syndrome Program at Macquarie University, Sydney. (Note that the material is not designed for use only by children with Down's Syndrome.)

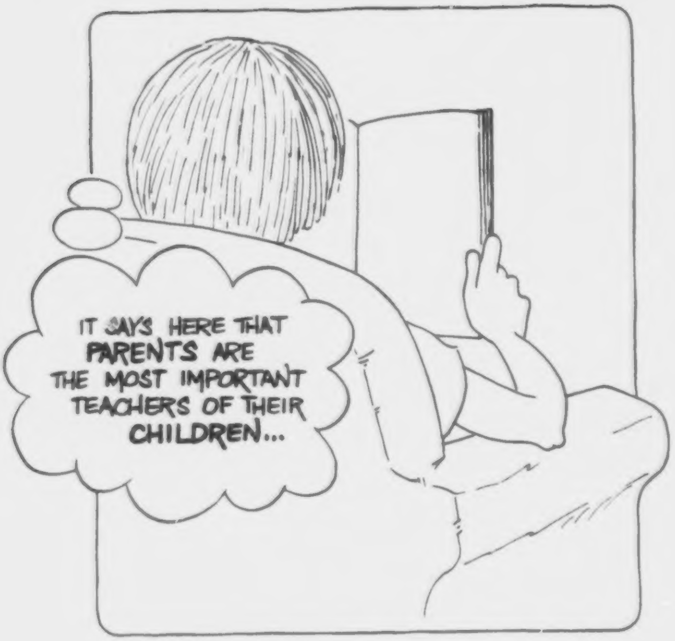
The Macquarie University Down's Syndrome Program was Australia's first early intervention program, and has had a deep and lasting influence on work with young disabled children throughout Australia and beyond.

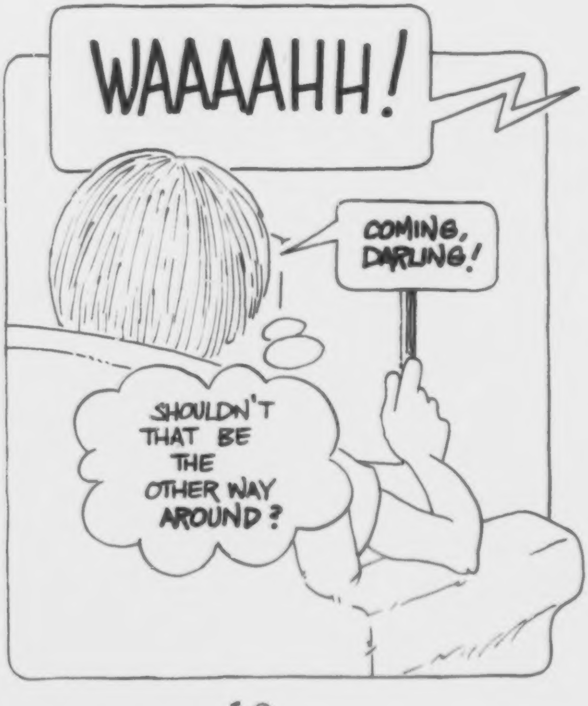
These are some principles of the Macquarie Program which are reflected in *Small Steps*:

- All children can learn. The intellectually disabled child learns more slowly, but he or she *can* learn.
- Disabled children need to learn the kinds of skills that all children learn and use — skills which will help them to play, to interact with others, to achieve maximum independence and to be part of the community.
- The parents are the child's most important teachers.
- The early years are crucial for learning. Teaching should begin as soon as possible after a problem is recognised — hence the term *early intervention*.
- Well-designed assessment and teaching techniques promote more efficient learning.
- Every child is different and every family is different. A successful program must meet the needs of both the child and the family.

Small Steps is not an instructional manual on being a 'good parent', nor does it tackle the huge subject of what it's like to be the parent of a disabled child. The information you will find here can and should be supplemented by other materials, and hopefully by personal contact with people who know you and your child.

Small Steps is designed as a practical resource, to be used in whatever way suits you best. It is written in the recognition that the most important things you can give your child are being given already, through your love and acceptance of your child, and the care, both physical and emotional, that you give him.


IT SAYS HERE THAT PARENTS ARE THE MOST IMPORTANT TEACHERS OF THEIR CHILDREN...


WAAAAHH!
COMING, DARLING!
SHOULDN'T THAT BE THE OTHER WAY AROUND?

CHAPTER 2

The Macquarie Program

Small Steps is based on the teaching methods and curriculum developed in the Macquarie University Down's Syndrome Program. The Macquarie Program is an early intervention program; that is, it aims to make the most of a child's potential through careful teaching in the early years of life, or from the time that a delay in development is first observed.

Until the 1970s 'early intervention' was a term rarely heard in Australia. Most intellectually disabled children received no systematic help from specially trained professionals until they started school. Most special assistance for very young children, beyond that of medical care, was reserved for those with physical rather than intellectual disabilities. Because there was less awareness of what could be achieved with intellectually disabled children if an early start was made, many parents were advised to institutionalise children who may have done very well at home, given the services that are available today. Many more were advised to give their children love and physical care until it was time for them to start a special school, and to confine any thoughts about 'education' to areas such as toilet training and feeding skills.

Of course, there were fortunate families who received excellent assistance from occupational therapists, physiotherapists, speech therapists and community nurses with a personal vision of what could be achieved. And there were families who taught their children effectively without any support at all. There were also academics and teachers who were questioning established ideas. New theories of child development were emphasising the importance of learning experiences during the first few years of life. If these experiences were so crucial to normal children, why not to disabled children too?

These reports suggested that with careful teaching, right from the moment of diagnosis, children with learning disabilities could learn a high proportion of the skills that normal children learn. Some of the most promising reports were coming from the Seattle (Washington) Down's Syndrome Program. Among those interested in these reports was a small group of staff members from the School of Education at Macquarie University. Funding was obtained to replicate the Seattle Program at Macquarie, and by 1974 the Macquarie University Down's Syndrome Program was under way.

The Macquarie Program was the first educational early intervention program in Australia, so the staff were concerned to find out not only whether early intervention worked, but also how it could be adapted to suit Australian conditions. A third concern was to demonstrate the methods and results to interested people around Australia, through publications and through the model classroom, which was designed to allow others to observe.

Now there are early intervention programs all around Australia, many of them using the methods and materials developed at Macquarie. The Macquarie Program has also been replicated in Hong Kong, and interest has been shown in other Asian countries.

The growth of early intervention has been due to its results. Comparative studies have shown that children receiving early intervention learn a higher proportion of skills before school entry than similar children without such help. More disabled children than ever before are attending their regular local schools, many remaining within the mainstream system throughout the primary years. Moderately and even severely disabled children are learning to read and write, and to communicate effectively with others. Children are learning these things, not because they have been give some sort of 'cure', but because they have been taught the right things at the right time, in the right way. This *Small Steps* kit aims to help you to do just that, with your child.

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE MACQUARIE PROGRAM

Here are some of the crucial characteristics of the Macquarie Program, and hence of the approach you will find in *Small Steps*.

It aims to help intellectually disabled children to lead the most normal lives possible. The more that disabled children learn to do, the more they can take part in normal family and community activities.

It is an educational program, rather than a therapeutic program. That is, it works through teaching the child the skills he is ready to learn, rather than administering treatment of underlying causes or conditions. Where such treatment is needed, it is seen as the role of the child's medical practitioner. The teachers and therapists at Macquarie aim to teach the children *skills*, often by teaching the parents how to teach at home.

It teaches normal developmental skills. This means that it teaches the skills that children normally learn as they develop — skills which will help them to develop further. You will not find any activities within *Small Steps* that could not be done quite appropriately with a normal child; it's just that with a normal child less deliberate teaching is necessary.

It teaches in small steps. Hence the name of this kit! Disabled children learn in just the same way that all children learn, but they learn more slowly. A challenge that may be a formidable obstacle to a disabled child *can* be met if it is presented as a *series* of *small* challenges.

It is based on careful assessment. Disabled children learn best if they are presented with the right task at the right time. So, before teaching begins, time is spent finding out exactly what the child can do, and hence what he is ready to learn next.

Children work towards objectives. The skills that a child is learning at any given time are called his objectives. Objectives describe what the child will be doing when he has achieved the skill. They help teachers and parents to keep in mind exactly what they are aiming for.

Every child has an individual program. A child's objectives at any time are termed his 'program'. What is included in a program depends on what the child is ready to learn, and the time and resources available to teach him. Programs are designed to help the child experience success, and to be practical and workable for the family. Most skills taught in *Small Steps* are drawn from the Macquarie Program's curriculum, known as the *Developmental Skills Inventory*, but the teaching methods can be adapted to teach any skill that a child needs to learn.

The teaching techniques are readily learned and require no special technology. They are based on years of careful investigation to find effective and practical teaching methods that can be used in the home as well as in the classroom. Often these techniques can become part of the general handling of the child, so that many skills can be taught as a part of everyday life, without special time being required.

WHAT HAPPENS IN THE PROGRAM

Children begin attending the Program, with their families, when they are about six to eight weeks old. They attend once a week, for a session with their teacher and with their physiotherapist. The teacher and physiotherapist talk to the parents about the child's progress over the past week. They observe the child to see whether he is ready to learn something new and they demonstrate ways of teaching to the parents. Wherever possible, they suggest ways to involve teaching in the general handling of the child, so that no special time need be set aside.

Right from the start, each child's individually designed program covers many areas of development — the co-ordination of hand and eye, the understanding of what is said by others, the development of the large muscles of the body, the child's expression of his feelings and needs, his ability to play and to socialise, and his self-care skills.

At about eighteen months of age the child joins the Toddler Class, or early preschool. Now he attends three times a week, for two-hour sessions. During these sessions he will have short sessions on his own with his teacher, working on his individual program. These sessions last about ten or fifteen minutes and may be in a quiet corner at a table or in a play setting. Most of the child's time is spent in play activities, which are designed to help him to use his skills in enjoyable and practical ways. He also learns to be a member of a group, during story-time, music and other group activities. This is an important preparation for integration into a normal preschool.

Regular discussions with the parents ensure that the classroom and home environments are helping the child towards the same goals.

During his fourth year the child moves into the Advanced Preschool Class. He still attends three times a week but the sessions are now a little longer. There is more emphasis on group work and on group play. When he is ready the child is introduced to the preacademic areas of reading, number and writing, as well as continuing to progress through other skill areas. Most of his time is still occupied by normal preschool activities such as painting, block play, dressing up, playing outdoors and so on.

By this stage the child is also attending his regular local preschool at least one day a week. The Program teachers visit the preschool to talk to the teachers there, and to observe how the child is using the skills he has learned at Macquarie.

Even though the teachers take on a wider role as time goes by, the child's parents continue to be his most important teachers. They spend more time with the child than anyone else and they know their child better than anyone else. Very often the parents teach the teachers too! All the teachers who have worked at Macquarie feel an immeasurable debt to the parents with whom they have worked, for the insights they have given not only about individual children, but about the very nature of teaching and learning.

SOME QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Here are some questions we have been asked about the Macquarie Program — and about *Small Steps* — and our answers.

Is the Macquarie Program only for children with Down's Syndrome?

Almost all the children who have attended the Macquarie Program are children with Down's Syndrome. This is because for research purposes it was necessary to have a group of children whose disability was evident at birth, and who could be expected to have roughly the same potential to learn.

But the methods and materials have not been designed specifically for children with Down's Syndrome. They have been used with children with all kinds of disabilities, from mild to severe in effect. They have been used with children who were progressing quite normally in most areas, but showed a specific area of delay, such as language. They are designed to be adapted to suit the needs of the individual child.

How closely does Small Steps *follow the Macquarie Program?*

The curriculum you will find in *Small Steps* is identical to that used at Macquarie, except that *Small Steps* covers the age range from birth to four years, while the Macquarie Program also includes a curriculum for five-year-olds. We chose the earlier cut-off point for practical reasons, and the older age materials are available separately. Ordering details are given in Chapter 5.

The assessing and teaching methods described for *Small Steps* are identical to those used at Macquarie.

Can Small Steps *be used in conjunction with another early intervention program?*

Yes, provided that you discuss this with your child's teachers and/or therapists. Otherwise, conflicting goals could be set and this could be confusing to both you and your child. If your child attends an early intervention program, *Small Steps* could be a source of extra ideas, or points for discussion, but ultimately the people who know your child (you first and your teacher or therapist second) are best equipped to decide the right approach in your situation.

You say that my child will learn more with early intervention than without it. But what are the long-term effects?

This is a hard question to answer, because early intervention as we know it hasn't been around long enough for many of those involved to have reached adulthood.

It is clear that five-year-old children who have received early intervention have a higher proportion of normal five-year-old skills than similar children who have not. Whether this remains true for, say, eighteen-year-olds will become clear with time.

We believe that the wider range of opportunities available to children who have had early intervention — opportunities for contact with their peers, for greater independence, for more effective communication with others — will be reflected throughout their lives. To a large extent, the challenge lies with those who provide education for older children, and those who determine employment policy, to ensure that children maintain the advantages provided by their earlier childhood experiences. There is also a challenge, for those of us (all of us?) who seek to influence the decision-makers.

How much time will I need to spend teaching my child at home?

You are teaching your child at home whether you are following an early intervention program or not! Children take up our time — some of us would say all our time — regardless. While your child is very young, little or no special time need be set aside for teaching, because you can involve teaching in everything you do with your child. Rather than spending more time, you will be spending some of your time differently — or at least with more awareness of why you are doing the things that you do.

Even if teaching your child does not take much extra time in objective terms, it may well *feel* as if it does. It can become such an absorbing interest or concern that it seems to affect everything — at times, anyway. So, saying that it won't take much extra time is not the same as saying that you'll hardly notice the difference! The question is whether you will find this difference in the way you spend your time, and the things you think about when you are with your child, enjoyable and rewarding. While few parents deny the stress that is sometimes involved, few fail to find it worthwhile, both for their children and for themselves.

Starting an early intervention program is like starting anything new. It takes more time in the early stages, until you are used to it and have a system set up and working. If you are using *Small Steps* there will be quite a lot of reading to do before you start, and your assessment of your child will take some time. Keep in mind that there is no rush about this: you can do it little by little. Once you have set up a program for your child and started teaching, time spent in reading and preparation will decrease.

COMMENTS FROM PARENTS

When talking to parents at Macquarie we asked them for their comments about what it's like to be involved in an early intervention program. Here are some of the replies.

> Having David in the Macquarie Program has been a great benefit to him and to the family as a whole. It has taught me how, when and what to teach him, and I feel I wouldn't have known this, even though I have two other children. It has also been a benefit with my friends. It helps them to understand more about handicapped children.
>
> I haven't had to give up any activities to work on David's program. Our lifestyle has remained the same. Dedicating time with David has made me more tolerant and understanding. I feel I'm rewarded when he masters a skill, so it's well worth the effort to help him.
>
> When David was born I was completely devastated, only because I had no knowledge of handicapped children. Now, after seeing what they can achieve through hard work, I know David's future will be a lot brighter than the grim thoughts I first had.

> Starting a program with one's handicapped child is very helpful and it initiates a responsible outlook for the child's progress and future. A new dimension is added to the parent's outlook on life and it can be a reinforcement to one's family and social life. The advice is plainly to learn to accept the new situation of one's handicapped child with positivity and foresight.

> I have had to give up certain social activities, but these activities would have been hindered by a normal newborn child nevertheless. However, the immense rewards you are given by dedicating your time to the program far outweigh these little pleasures. It is more difficult for Alana to perform certain skills that are taken for granted in a normal child. But when she does master them the look on her face — showing achievement and independence — makes that time even more worthwhile and gratifying.
>
> Being involved in an early intervention program has dramatically changed the way I feel about my child's handicap. Alana will one day hopefully be mostly independent, as I am quite certain that she will not be completely happy if she cannot achieve this goal. My expectations for her are extremely high, because if I don't have these goals behind me, I would find excuses for her being slow in certain areas, thus leaving her to stagnate rather than achieve her fullest potential. This might leave me with a lot of disappointments but Alana has, in fact, already excelled my expectations of what she would achieve by this age.

> I have given up going to College but when May-May goes to school I'll start again. It's been worth it to dedicate my time to May-May because I feel she benefits so much from all the teaching.

I would advise parents to start a program as soon as possible, to give their child the best chance possible, and not to dwell on 'if only things were different'. I try to involve my older child in the program rather than telling her to go away because I have to work with John.

I find that being involved in the program has helped me mentally because it's made me feel like I could get in there and do something constructive to help her, and I think that's helped our relationship to each other, Kelly and I, because I am helping her and not just sitting back watching. So, yes, it definitely makes a difference, being involved.

I definitely advise people to try — you don't get anything by not trying, whereas it makes a lot of difference to the child even with a little bit of help. It makes them more independent, which is what you want in the end.

CHAPTER 3

The *Small Steps* Program

The *Small Steps* program is addressed, first and foremost, to parents — parents who, by necessity or choice, plan to teach their disabled children by themselves, within their own homes.

It is inspired by the belief that parents are the most important teachers of their children and by years of experience of just how effectively parents can teach. This is not to say that the progress a child makes directly reflects the skill of his parents; a child's ***potential to learn*** plays a part in determining progress, and so does the quality of the advice that parents are given. But at Macquarie we have seen, over and over again, that when parents are determined that their child will learn a particular skill, learn it he will. Our role as teachers has been to help parents to identify the steps by which their child can progress towards a particular goal, and to suggest ways in which each step can be taught.

Let's look closely at the concept of 'small steps'. All children learn new skills one step at a time. No child wakes up one morning suddenly able to walk or feed himself or draw a picture of Mummy. Children learn these skills little by little, with each new achievement preparing the way for another. Sometimes children learn so quickly that we barely notice the steps they take along the way, but these steps are there and they are much the same for all children.

When a child has a disability that makes learning harder, he may need more little in-between steps in order to reach the same goals that his non-handicapped brothers and sisters seem to reach in a few large bounds. It will take him longer to get there, but he can get there, as long as he is shown the very step he needs to take, just when he is ready to take it. That is what we aim to do when we teach intellectually disabled children and that is why we call this program *Small Steps*.

Material in the *Small Steps* program differs from material previously published for the Macquarie Program in that it:

- Offers more basic information about how to assess a child, develop a program, and teach, so that it can be used by those with no prior teaching experience
- Offers more detail about specific items to be taught.

THE CONTENTS OF *SMALL STEPS*

The *Small Steps* program is divided into two major parts. Books 1, 2 and 3 contain a discussion of some of the major issues and methods of the Macquarie approach to early intervention. Books 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8 present the curriculum: four books that each cover a different area of development and one book with the Developmental Skills Inventory — checklists used to assess the child.

Book 1: Introduction to Small Steps

This book, which you're reading now, tells you the background of the Macquarie Program and how to use *Small Steps*.

Book 2: Your Child's Program

This book explains how to plan a program that's right for the individual child and how to carry out this program. There are six chapters:

- Chapter 1: How to assess your child, to find out what he can do now and what he needs to learn next
- Chapter 2: How to set objectives for your child; how to choose what you will teach
- Chapter 3: How to teach
- Chapter 4: When and why to make changes in your child's program
- Chapter 5: The importance of play
- Chapter 6: Behaviour problems and how to avoid them

Book 3: Communication Skills

The skill of communicating with others is crucial to every child. This book contains the following chapters:

- Chapter 1: Language learning
- Chapter 2: Teaching the preverbal child
- Chapter 3: Teaching the verbal child

Book 4: Gross Motor Skills

Gross Motor skills use the large muscles of the body. These enable a child to sit, crawl, walk, climb, catch a ball, ride a bike and so on.

Book 5: Fine Motor Skills

Fine Motor skills use the small muscles of the hand and eye. These enable a child to grasp a rattle, turn the page of a book, draw a picture, do a jigsaw puzzle and so on. Also included in this area are the ways in which a child uses his skills of hand and eye to solve problems, match and sort things, and learn about such concepts as colour, shape and size.

Book 6: Receptive Language Skills

Receptive Language skills involve the understanding of the language of others. These enable a child to attend to what others are saying, recognise words and phrases, follow directions and most importantly, use language himself.

Book 7: Personal and Social Skills

Personal and Social skills involve the ability to relate to others and to achieve independence in self-care. These include play skills, the ability to fit in with others, and personal skills such as eating, toileting and dressing.

Book 8: Developmental Skills Inventory

The Developmental Skills Inventory, or D.S.I., is what brings the individual parts and books of *Small Steps* all together. It is a series of checklists used for assessing the child and as a guide for setting objectives.

HOW TO USE *SMALL STEPS*

The first and simplest answer to the question 'How do I use *Small Steps?*' is this: Use it in the way that suits you best!

You can use it quite informally, if you choose, as a source of ideas. Or you can use it in a more systematic way — as a do-it-yourself guide to early intervention.

If you wish to do the latter, we suggest that you proceed as follows.

1. Read the first few chapters of Book 2. These will tell you how to assess, teach and set objectives.
2. Read Book 3. This will tell you how to make the most of your child's communication skills.
3. Assess your child's communication skills, as explained in Book 3.
4. To assess your child's other skill areas, look at the *Developmental Skills Inventory* (Book 8) and decide which skills should be assessed. Look up each item in Book 4 (Gross Motor), 5 (Fine Motor), 6 (Receptive Language) or 7 (Personal and Social), so that you know exactly how each item should be assessed.
5. Assess your child, using the D.S.I.
6. Set objectives for your child in all skill areas, including communication.
7. Start teaching!
8. While you are teaching, read the remaining chapters of Book 2. These will tell you about record-keeping, play and how the child remembers and extends new skills.
9. As your child acquires new skills, use the D.S.I. or communication checklists to choose objectives.

Of course, you can vary these steps to suit your needs. Perhaps you would like to start by assessing just one skill area, and beginning to teach in that area, before going on to plan a comprehensive program.

AN IMPORTANT QUESTION

There seems to be so much to read in this kit. Do I really have to read it all?

No. Not all at once anyway! The bulk of *Small Steps* is in Books 4, 5, 6 and 7, and these are designed as reference books. You will look up sections or individual items as you need them — as you do with an encyclopaedia.

We have attempted to give you all the information you need to carry out an early intervention program with your child to a professional standard. No attempt has been made to simplify the material; if we did that, we could not assure you that it would work. But there is no need to try to absorb all this information right from the beginning. Teachers working at Macquarie undertake a long on-the-job training period, and you could see your beginnings in the same way.

THE SEQUENCES

In Books 4, 5, 6 and 7, you will find information about how to assess and teach each item in the *Developmental Skills Inventory*, or D.S.I. (Book 8). Here we explain how to find and use this information.

The D.S.I. consists of four checklists, used for assessing the child and as a guide for setting objectives. These checklists cover four areas of development:

- Gross Motor
- Fine Motor
- Receptive Language
- Personal and Social.

The fifth area of development, Expressive Language, or Communication, is covered in Book 3.

Within each area of development the skills are divided into subgroups of related skills. These subgroups are called Sequences. They are designed to help you see the relationships between different skills and to make setting objectives easier. You will be able to identify your child's stronger and weaker areas within each major area of development. With this information, you can ensure that your program for your child builds on his strengths, helps him to catch up in weaker areas and provides him with balance, variety and interest.

Some skills could belong just as happily in one Sequence as in another. We have placed each skill where we think it belongs best, but if you disagree, well and good — you are using *Small Steps* flexibly and creatively!

Here are the Sequences you will find in *Small Steps* together with the code letters by which they are identified.

Gross Motor

- Prewalking (GM.A)
- Balancing, Walking, Running (GM.B)
- Stairs and Climbing (GM.C)
- Ball Skills (GM.D)
- Jumping (GM.E)
- Trike Riding (GM.F)

Fine Motor

- Looking (FM.A)
- Grasping (FM.B)
- Object Permanence (FM.C)
- Putting (FM.D)
- Manipulative Skills (FM.E)
- Drawing (FM.F)
- Book Skills (FM.G)
- Problem Solving and Puzzles (FM.H)
- Matching and Sorting: Objects and Pictures (FM.I)
- Matching, Sorting and Selecting: Preacademics (FM.J)

Receptive Language

- Listening and Attending (RL.A)
- Responding to Gestures and Simple Directions (RL.B)
- Choosing Between Alternatives: Objects and Pictures (RL.C)
- Responding to Directions Involving Action Words (RL.D)
- Responding to Directions Involving Attribute Words (RL.E)
- Responding to Directions Involving Location Words (RL.F)
- Responding to Grammatical Features (RL.G)

Personal and Social

- Socialisation and Play (PS.A)
- Eating and Drinking (PS.B)
- Dressing (PS.C)
- Toileting (PS.D)
- Washing and Grooming (PS.E)

Using the Sequences

Some of these Sequences contain just a few skills; some contain many. Some can be begun with the tiny baby, while others begin to be relevant once the child is older.

Depending on the age and level of development of your child, and your own resources, you might be working on just one or two Sequences from each area of development at a time, or you may be working on several Sequences from each area — either all at once or alternately. In other words, you draw from them to suit your child and the time you have available for teaching.

Don't attempt to read through all the material in the Sequences at once! Use the Sequences as a reference work, looking up each item, or group of items, as you need it.

What will the Sequences tell you? First we make some general comments at the beginning of each Sequence. If you are going to assess or teach an item from a particular Sequence for the first time, it's a good idea to read these general notes first. They will tell you why this group of skills is important, and may provide information about teaching techniques, or equipment, that is relevant to all the items within the group.

Following these general notes, you will find a list of all the skills within the Sequence. This list will help you to see how the particular item that interests you fits into the Sequence as a whole.

Each item is then discussed in turn, under its *code of letters and number*. Each code has three parts, like this:

RL.B.21

The first two letters tell you the area of development of that particular item — in this case, Receptive Language (RL). The next letter tells you the Sequence to which the item belongs — in this case, Choosing Between Alternatives: Objects and Pictures (Receptive Language, Sequence B). The number corresponds to the number of that item in the D.S.I. Checklist. Thus RL.B.21 refers to the skill 'Gives an object to the speaker when asked' — item 21 on the Receptive Language Checklist, belonging to Sequence B.

You will find these codes helpful when you wish to cross-reference between items; otherwise you don't need to worry about them very much!

The discussion of each item includes all or some of the following information:

- Why the skill is important.
- Where it fits in with other skills.
- *How to Assess* the skill (including materials needed, method of assessment and the standard at which the skill should be performed).
- *How to Teach* the skill — with emphasis on specific techniques. This information is designed to supplement more general discussion of teaching in Book 2, Chapter 3.
- *Positioning, Carrying and Playing*. You will find this heading under many early Gross Motor items. It tells you how to encourage motor development in your everyday handling of your child.
- *Playtime and Round-the-house Activities* which can help your child to learn the skill. You may find that your child can learn many skills using these informal approaches alone.
- *Remembering and Extending*. This information helps you to make sure that your child makes use of, and builds on, his new-found skill.

We do not give all this information for every task. For many tasks, there is no distinction between teaching and helping your child to practise in play. For many others, remembering and extending will happen naturally if you continue with the Sequence, so there is no need for special notes on these points. You will also find that some Sequences are presented in different ways from others. In some Personal and Social Sequences, for instance, we discuss how to assess each item, one by one, and then go on to discuss teaching methods for the entire group of skills, as a single continuum. For each Sequence, we have chosen the method of presentation that allows us to get across the most important information in the clearest way. *If in doubt as to how to use a particular Sequence, look at the general introductory notes at its beginning.*

Once again, we stress that the material you will find in the Sequences is intended as a resource to be dipped into when needed — a reference work, or source of ideas, to help you as you teach your child. The notes on how to assess each item should be heeded if you wish your assessment to reflect the same standards used at Macquarie. Beyond this proviso, we invite you to use the information you will find here as a starting point, a foil for your own ideas, a resource to help you, rather than to restrict you. Although it is hard to avoid a 'do this, do that' tone, we acknowledge that *you* are the one who knows your child, and who can gauge whether something is working or not, and so *you* are the best one to evaluate our suggestions.

CHAPTER 4

Glossary

Here we explain some of the terms used in *Small Steps* — terms which may be unfamiliar to you or used in an unfamiliar way.

Areas of development. These are the five major areas in which children make progress as they develop or grow. They are Fine Motor skills, Communication, Receptive Language, Personal and Social skills, and Gross Motor skills. You will find these terms explained below.

Assessment. In general usage this means 'testing'. In *Small Steps* we use it to refer to the process of finding out exactly what a child can do, through planned observation of his performance of particular activities. Assessment is used to tell us what the child is ready to learn next.

Chronological age. A child's actual age, that is, the years and months that have passed since his birthdate.

Communication. The ability to make wants, needs and feelings known to others, through the use of gestures, sounds, words and sentences, and also to respond to the communications of others.

Concept; conceptual. A concept is an idea. Conceptual skills are those which require the formation of an idea, or acting on the basis of an idea.

Developmental age. The level of development that a child has reached. This will not necessarily be the same as his chronological age. The developmental age is determined by assessing the child on a specially designed test, and comparing what he can do with the age at which the average child attains those skills.

Developmental milestone. A skill which the majority of children attain at a particular age. It is widely used to indicate that a child has reached a particular level of development.

Early intervention. The process of helping young handicapped children, or children at risk of delay, to make the most of their potential, by teaching the right skills at the right time.

Expressive language. See *Communication.*

Fine Motor skills. Fine Motor is the area of development concerned with the small muscles of the body, usually those of the hand and eye. Fine Motor skills include reaching and grasping, putting, drawing, turning pages and so on. This area of development also includes conceptual skills such as recognising that an object still exists when it is out of sight (object permanence), problem solving, the ability to match and sort, and preacademic skills.

Goals. These are long-term aims. They differ from objectives, which are short-term aims.

Gross Motor skills. Gross Motor is the area of development concerned with the large muscles of the body. Gross Motor skills include all the skills which contribute to head control, sitting, crawling, standing, walking, balancing, climbing and so on.

Hand–eye co-ordination. The ability to bring the hand to, and manipulate, objects that are seen.

I.Q. This stands for 'Intelligence Quotient'. A child's I.Q. is ascertained by determining his developmental age on the basis of specially designed tests, and describing this as a proportion of his chronological age. The average I.Q. is 100. A score of more than 100 means that the child's developmental age is greater than his chronological age. A score of less than 100 means that the child's developmental age is less than his chronological age. You will find a brief mention of I.Q. in Book 2, Chapter 1.

Milestone. See *Developmental milestone.*

Non-verbal. This means 'not speaking' or 'not spoken'.

Object permanence. The concept that objects and people continue to exist, even when they are out of sight.

Objectives. These are our short-term goals for the child. They describe the skills he is learning at any given time. Objectives are worded so that they show what the child will be doing when he has mastered a particular skill.

Personal and Social skills. The Personal and Social area of development is concerned with the ability to socialise with others, the ability to play, both alone and in groups, and self-care skills such as eating and drinking, toileting, dressing, washing and grooming.

Preacademic skills. These are skills which lead on to the 'academic' skills taught at school, particularly reading, number work and abstract concepts such as colour, size and shape. Preacademic skills are presented in *Small Steps* as a subgroup of Fine Motor skills.

Preverbal. We use this term to refer to the child who is not yet talking, and to communication skills which use gestures or sounds rather than words. The term preverbal implies that a *verbal* stage will come later, but preverbal skills are also essential for the child who will communicate through signs.

Program. This term is used both to refer to an organisation, or set of materials, that is designed to fulfil certain goals (as in the Macquarie Program) and to an individual child's set of objectives.

Receptive Language skills. This area of development is concerned with the child's ability to respond to, and understand, the language of others.

Reinforcement. The process of providing a consequence to an action, such that the doer will be encouraged to perform that action again.

Rotation. This term is used in the Gross Motor program to describe a twist of the body, such that the shoulder moves towards the opposite hip. Rotation is particularly important for balancing.

Sequence. A sequence is a group of closely related skills, arranged in the order in which they are normally acquired, so that one skill builds on another — like a set of steps. Each of the areas of development in *Small Steps* is divided into sequences. Children will generally be working on two or more sequences from each area of development at any one time.

Verbal. This means 'spoken' in phrases such as 'verbal directions'. The verbal child is a child who can speak, that is, the child who can communicate using words and/or phrases. Verbal skills are communication skills in which words or phrases are used.

CHAPTER 5

Resource List

Listed below are suggested books on play, obtainable from good bookshops:

Australian Broadcasting Corporation. *Useful Book — Songs and Ideas from Play School* (ABC, Sydney).
Caston, D. *Easy to Make Toys for Your Handicapped Child* (Human Horizons Series, 1983).
Einan, D. *Creative Play* (Penguin, 1985).
Hagstron, J. and Morril, J. *Games Babies Play: A Handbook of Games to Play with Infants* (Addison-Wesley, 1981).
Levis, D. *Australian Guide to Good Toys* (Social Science Press, 1986).
May, A. *Play and Your Child* (Nelson, 1986).
Nursing Mothers' Association. *Merrily, Merrily: A Book of Songs and Rhymes* (Nursing Mothers' Association of Australia, 357 Burwood Road, Hawthorn, Victoria 3122).
Petrie, P. *Baby Play: Activities for Discovery and Development During the First Year of Life* (Doubleday, 1987).
Wellisch, M. *Early Childhood Learning Activities Book* (Shakespeare Head Press, 1985).

Here are some guides to selecting suitable books for young children:

Butler, D. *Babies Need Books* (Pelican, 1980).
Taylor, B. and Braithwaite, P. (eds) *The Good Book Guide to Children's Books* (Pelican).
Trelease, J. *The Read Aloud Handbook* (Pelican).

The following books are recommended for parents of intellectually disabled children:

Bochner, S., Price, P. and Salamon, L. *Learning to Talk: A Program for Helping Language-delayed Children Acquire Early Communication Skills* (Macquarie University, 1985).
Carr, J. *Helping Your Handicapped Child.* A step-by-step guide to everyday problems (Penguin, 1980).
Cunningham, C. *Down's Syndrome: An Introduction for Parents* (Human Horizon Series, 1982).
Cunningham, C. and Sloper, P. *Helping Your Handicapped Baby* (Human Horizon Series, 1978).
Dmitriev, V. *Time to Begin: Early Education for Children with Down's Syndrome* (Caring Inc., 1982).
Jeffree, D. M., McConkey, R. and Hewson, S. *Let Me Play* (Souvenir Press, 1977).
Jeffree, D. M., McConkey, R. and Hewson, S. *Teaching the Handicapped Child* (Human Horizon Series, 1977).
Kiernan, C., Jordan, R. and Saunders, C. *Starting Off: Establishing Play and Communication in the Handicapped Child* (Human Horizon Series, 1978).
Lane, D. and Stratford, B. *Current Approaches to Down's Syndrome* (Edelan, Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1985).
Cairns, S. and Pieterse, M. *T.E.L.L.—Teaching Early Language for Living: A Communication Program* (Macquarie University, 1983).

A more comprehensive list is available from the address given below.

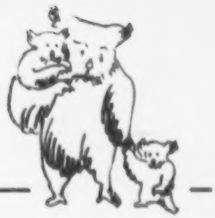
For a complete list of materials produced in the Down's Syndrome Program and the Special Education Centre at Macquarie University, and for information about ordering, please write to:

The Secretary
Macquarie University Special Education
Centre
Macquarie University
North Ryde, NSW 2109 AUSTRALIA

The *Small Steps* Videotape Programs, which have been designed as an optional supplement to this kit, can be ordered through the above address.

CHAPTER 6

The *Small Steps* Videotape



The *Small Steps* videotape is a supplement to the kit and is entirely optional. It was prepared by Robin Treloar and Moira Pieterse, and produced by Geoff Batley in 1985. It is available from the Macquarie University Special Education Centre, North Ryde, NSW 2109, telephone (02) 805-8691.

Part 1: *Introduction*, 25 minutes
Parents are the most important teachers of young children. Parents can learn ways to help their disabled children at home, using the program developed at Macquarie University. This first session discusses the importance of parent involvement with the disabled child and the value of early intervention. It illustrates the Macquarie Program, on which *Small Steps* is based.

Part 2: *Children Learn — Parents Teach*, 22 minutes
This part outlines the range of activities covered in the program (Gross Motor, Fine Motor, Language Communication, Personal and Social, and Play). Parents express their thoughts and feelings and describe their experiences using the program with their children, the effect on the family and the benefits for the child.

Part 3: *The Sequences of Development*, 22 minutes
Normal childhood development can be viewed as a set of sequences of learning. When these sequences are broken down into small steps they are more easily mastered. Physiotherapist Diana Uther first illustrates the small steps in a Gross Motor sequence, from early head control, through sitting and crawling, to standing and walking. Diana then goes on to explain the development of reaching and grasping.

Part 4: *Assessment — Planned Observation*, 18 minutes
Using the sequences of normal development, the child's abilities are observed and her strengths and weaknesses identified. Suggestions are given on how to plan your observations to obtain a clear picture of your child's needs.

Part 5: *Finding the Right Step*, 12 minutes
This part deals with deciding what to teach. Now that you know what your child can do, you must set some objectives. Develop a plan which is just right for your child.

Part 6: *How to Teach, Part 1*, 17 minutes
This part illustrates the basic steps of teaching: getting your child's attention; giving the instruction; when and how to demonstrate; prompting the response; giving time to respond; expecting a response.

Part 7: *How to Teach, Part 2*, 21 minutes
This part describes what to do after the child has tried the activity: making the action rewarding; praise, touch, special treats, etc.; how to manage errors and inattention.

Part 8: *Playing, Remembering, Extending*, 24 minutes
This part deals with using the new skills in everyday life. It suggests ways to provide opportunities for the child to learn and practise through play, and it helps the parent to understand the importance of play in children's learning.

Part 9: *The Match-to-Sample Game*, 15 minutes
The match-to-sample game provides a novel and effective way to learn language concepts. The child learns through matching similar objects and pictures, then selecting them, and then naming them, in a well-defined sequence.

Part 10: *Language, Part 1*, 17 minutes
This part deals with the child's need to communicate. It shows how to encourage language development in babies and young children who are not yet talking.

Part 11: *Language, Part 2*, 17 minutes
This part illustrates how to simply and effectively extend the first single words and how to teach language through play as part of the child's everyday experiences. It closes with a summing up and a word for parents.

Small Steps is an Early Intervention Program for young children with developmental delays. The kit consists of eight books, and an optional videotape program.

Book 1: Introduction to Small Steps
This introductory book presents the background to Small Steps, and suggests ways in which it can be used.

Book 2: Your Child's Program
This book explains how to select goals for the individual child, and how to help the child achieve these goals in the context of family life.

Book 3: Communication Skills
This book is concerned with language learning, at both the preverbal and verbal levels. Language is seen in the context of social interaction, and skills are taught through play and 'everyday' activities.

Book 4: Gross Motor Skills
This book presents the skills which involve the large muscles of the body. These enable a child to sit, crawl, walk, climb, catch a ball and so on. It has been prepared by physiotherapists experienced with young children with disabilities.

Book 5: Fine Motor Skills
Fine Motor skills use the small muscles of the hand and eye. They range from the baby's first grasp of the parent's finger to complex skills such as drawing and cutting. Also included are problem-solving skills and the development of concepts such as colour, shape and size.

Book 6: Receptive Language Skills
Receptive Language skills involve the understanding of the language of others. They enable a child to attend to what others are saying, to follow directions and, most importantly, to use language him or herself.

Book 7: Personal and Social Skills
In this book we look at skills that help children to relate to others, to play and to achieve independence in eating, toileting, dressing and grooming.

Book 8: Developmental Skills Inventory
The D.S.I. draws together the individual parts of Small Steps. It is a series of checklists used for assessing the child and as a guide for setting objectives.

SMALL STEPS

AN EARLY INTERVENTION PROGRAM FOR CHILDREN WITH DEVELOPMENTAL DELAYS

Book 2 Your Child's Program

Moira Pieterse and Robin Treloar
with Sue Cairns

Macquarie University Sydney

SMALL STEPS

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Macquarie University Sydney

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CHAPTER 1

How to Assess Your Child

Assessment is the very first step in setting up a teaching program. Assessment helps you to decide *what to teach*.

If you and your child have had any contact with professionals, the term 'assessment' will not be new to you. Probably an assessment has been made of your child — possibly many different assessments. For many people, assessments, like exams, cause anxiety. When we asked parents how they felt when watching their children being assessed, we received many responses like these:

> When a teacher is assessing David I feel a bit apprehensive, knowing he may not do as he's told. If he does well I feel like any mother would — exceptionally happy. If he doesn't do too well I do feel a bit dejected.
>
> I sit there watching, and I think 'You did that for me yesterday, so why won't you do it now?' I'd like to say something, but I bite my fingernails instead.

Despite their misgivings, most parents of disabled children do want to have their children assessed. Most are eager to have as much information, and as many different opinions, as possible about their child's condition.

> Assessment of our child by teachers/professionals provides us as parents with an awareness of our child's strengths, weaknesses and possible handicaps in future. It is necessary to have the assessment on a continual basis as parents can be guided and encouraged to take on a positive, responsible role in their child's development.
>
> I feel that an assessment is an opinion and something for the parents to think about. I think it is good to have different assessments done, as they can vary.

Many parents find that the experience of watching someone else assess their child gives them a sense of direction or purpose in their work with their child at home.

> When a teacher or professional is assessing Alana, it helps my working with her, in that I feel more confident in her ability to achieve the objectives set out by the program.
>
> It gives me ideas. I think, well, she can't do that now, but I could easily teach her, so she'll be able to do it next time.

In this chapter we describe a way in which you can assess your child yourself, in your own home.

We are not suggesting that you should avoid professional assessments. Such assessments are essential if there is any sign of a physical or medical problem. And assessments by teachers or therapists will give you new ways of looking at things, against which you can weigh your own findings.

But many parents do not have as much access to professional services as they would like, and feel the need for more evaluation of their child's progress. Assessment at home is a way around the problems of isolation or lack of services. Parents can learn to assess their own children just as accurately and constructively as professionals can — and perhaps more so.

Assessment is a hard skill for professionals to learn, and in some ways it can be even harder for parents. No parent finds it easy to be detached and objective, and your child may take time to adapt to the strange new requirements you will make of her. Assessment is time-consuming, too, and parents cannot free themselves from other commitments as easily as professionals can, in their working environments. But there are ways around these problems and, on the positive side, parents can be much more *flexible* in their approach to assessment than a teacher or therapist in an office with an hour or two to spare can ever hope to be!

WHAT IS ASSESSMENT?

Assessment is, essentially, *observation* with the purpose of *gaining information*. What we look for depends on what we want to know.

For practical reasons, all assessments present a *selection* of items that are planned to be *representative* of the skills or abilities under examination. Many assessments specify the time to be taken and the precise way in which each item is to be administered. Others are more informal in their approach. But all are designed to *give information to the tester*, and all are based on some form of *planned observation*.

When you assess your child, you will be looking for information *you* need in order to teach your child more effectively, *and the most important skill you will use is your ability to observe your child* — a skill in which you have already had plenty of practice!

WHY IS ASSESSMENT SO IMPORTANT?

There are different answers to this question, depending on the kind of assessment being used. Some assessments are designed to indicate a child's general level of ability, as compared to the 'norm' or 'average' for her age. These include I.Q. tests, which are used mainly to place a child in the level of schooling or therapy considered appropriate to her score. Other assessments are designed to diagnose the nature of a child's disability, and hence to suggest the kind of treatment required.

We are concerned here with a third kind of assessment, which has the following features:

- It is based on the premise that all children learn skills in much the same way, and in much the same order, even if a disability means that they learn more slowly.
- It sets out the most crucial skills that children normally acquire, in the order in which they normally acquire them. Where not all skills can be included, for practical reasons, it provides a selection of representative skills.
- It tells us precisely what the child can and cannot do.
- It helps us to identify the skill to be taught next, according to the normal sequence of development — the next small step.

The staff of the Macquarie Program have compiled the *Developmental Skills Inventory* (or D.S.I.) to provide an assessment of this kind for use with very young children. We will show you how to use the D.S.I. to assess your child, just as it has been used by the teachers at Macquarie.

Here are some more important properties of the D.S.I.:

- It lets us see what progress the child is making.
- It helps us to check the priorities in our teaching programs.
- It tells us when and where to change our programs.
- It rewards the teacher, by showing us what has been achieved!

We will discuss these points further in the chapters that follow. The most important feature of the D.S.I. is that *it tells us what to teach next.*

You may well say, 'I know what my child can do. I'm with her constantly. I see everything she does. Why can't I forget about this complicated assessment business, and just check off the things I *know* she can do, and go on from there?'

You *will* be able to use your deep-seated knowledge of your child when you assess her, in a way that no professional can ever hope to do. But there are risks in relying solely on your 'everyday' observations — risks that apply to teachers as well as to parents. The risks are *overestimating* what a child can do and *underestimating* what a child can do.

Overestimating what a child can do leads to a program that is just too hard. Such a program prevents the child from achieving ready success. Even if you have seen your child carry out a certain skill, you need to check that she can do it well enough, and consistently enough, to be ready to go on to something harder.

> Maureen sees her daughter Sandy put the occasional piece into a simple puzzle. But she does not see (because Sandy moves so quickly) that just as often she will have a brief try, decide it is too hard, and go on to something else. When Maureen introduces a harder puzzle, Sally is interested at first, but quickly becomes frustrated. Every teaching session ends up with the puzzle on the floor, and Maureen and Sandy not the best of friends.

Underestimating what a child can do can lead to a program which lacks challenge and interest. Teachers frequently make assumptions which underestimate the child. It is easy to say: 'Sue can't clap hands, so she won't be able to bang two blocks together, either.' But perhaps Sue can bang two blocks, even though it usually comes a little later in development than handclapping.

All children have 'jumps' and 'gaps' in their development here and there; it would be hard to find a child whose development followed the normal pattern exactly. The child's individual personality, her likes and dislikes, influence the attention she will give to different tasks. Sue may have no interest in clapping hands, but perhaps she will like the sound of banging blocks and attack the task with relish!

A program which gives a good chance of success is NOT the same thing as an easy program. A program which gives a good chance of success is one which is based on an accurate assessment of what a child can and cannot do.

The D.S.I. has been designed to help teachers and parents build up an accurate picture, and make sound decisions about what to teach next.

WHAT DOES THE D.S.I. CONSIST OF?

The D.S.I. contains four checklists, each one covering a different area of development. These areas are:

- *Gross Motor:* The use of the large muscles of the body
- *Fine Motor:* The use of the small muscles of the hand, hand–eye co-ordination, and the development of concepts that form the basis for the 'academic' skills taught at school
- *Receptive Language:* The child's understanding of what is said to her
- *Personal and Social:* The child's ability to look after her own personal needs and to interact with others.

The child's *communication* skills, or expressive language skills, are assessed in a different way, using the *T.E.L.L.* Communication Program. This is discussed in Book 3. Communication is perhaps the most important skill area of all, so do put time aside to read these chapters, and include expressive language in your assessment.

Each checklist in the D.S.I. consists of a list of skills. These skills are generally quite ordinary, everyday things; they are selected *because* they are things that children normally do. Here are a few examples from each checklist:

Gross Motor:

A.39: On tummy, gets to crawl position and rocks.
B.67: Walks, pushing a cart.
E.112: Jumps from a block or bottom step, hands held.
D.127: Throws a small ball overhand, with twist.
F.134: Steers a trike around wide corners.

Fine Motor:

B.12: Grasps a rattle actively.
G.54: Turns pages of a cardboard book.
J.83: Matches colours, choice of two.
F.90: Copies a circle.
J.112: Sorts three shapes.

Receptive Language:

A.4: Maintains facial contact (watches the speaker's eyes and mouth).
B.21: Gives an object to the speaker when asked.
C.35: Chooses a picture when named, choice of four.
E.54: Selects *big*, choice of big and little.
E.79: Answers or demonstrates: 'What do you do when you're *cold/tired/hungry*?'

Personal and Social:

A.6: Smiles spontaneously.
B.19: Feeds self finger foods (biscuits, rusks, etc.).
A.23: Plays ball by pushing the ball back to a parent.
C.64: Takes off a singlet or T-shirt.
D.69: Uses the toilet with adult direction.

This is just a small sample of the hundreds of skills included in the D.S.I.

HOW IS THE D.S.I. ORGANISED?

You will find the D.S.I. in Book 8 of *Small Steps*, and we suggest that you refer to it as you read through this section.

Each item in each checklist is listed under two headings — an *age level* and a *sequence*.

Age Levels

The age levels shown in the D.S.I. indicate the ages at which average children acquire particular skills. Extensive research has been used to determine the average age at which a skill is learned. The age levels most often used in the D.S.I. are:

0 to 3 months
3 to 6 months
6 to 9 months
9 to 12 months
12 to 15 months
15 to 18 months
18 months to 2 years
2 to 3 years
3 to 4 years.

More precise age levels are given in the early stages of the Gross Motor Checklist.

The age levels will give you a general guide as to how your child is progressing relative to the 'norm', but this is *not* their prime purpose. The child's progress relative to her own abilities and previous achievements is much more important than any comparison to the 'average' child (if such a child exists!). The main purpose of the age levels is to give you a picture of the *range* of different activities your child may be working on at her level of development, whatever that level may be. If, for example, your child has mastered some Fine Motor skills at the 12–15 months level, you can look at the other Fine Motor skills at that level to see the other kinds of things your child might be ready to learn. You can then assess her to find out if she is, in fact, ready to learn those skills and what teaching is needed to prepare her to learn them.

It is very common for a child to have progressed further in some areas of development than in others. For example, your child may be achieving skills in the 2–3 years age level in Fine Motor and Personal/Social skills, but may be still at the 18 months–2 years level in Receptive Language, and at the 15–18 months level in Gross Motor. The age levels will help you to see your child's relative strengths and weaknesses, and hence where your priorities will lie when you teach her.

Sequences

As well as being listed under an age level, each item in the D.S.I. is listed under a sequence.

Within each area of development (Gross Motor, Fine Motor, and so on) are several different sequences. These sequences bring together skills that are closely related — skills that lead towards the same long-term goals.

In the area of *Receptive Language*, for instance, you will find the following sequences.

Sequence A: *Listening and Attending*. These are the basic skills of looking and listening on which all the more advanced Receptive Language skills depend.

Sequence B: *Responding to Gestures and Simple Directions*. Here the child learns the meanings of simple gestures, words and phrases.

Sequence C: *Choosing Between Alternatives: Objects and Pictures*. This sequence helps the child to learn the names of objects. More advanced skills concentrate on the functions of objects and the categories to which they belong.

Sequence D: *Responding to Directions Involving Action Words*. Here the child learns the meanings of action words, and hence learns to follow directions which involve doing things.

Sequence E: *Responding to Directions Involving Attribute Words*. In this sequence, the child learns the meanings of words which describe what something is like — adjectives and adverbs.

Sequence F: *Responding to Directions Involving Location Words*. Here the child learns the meanings of location words — or what most of us know as 'prepositions'.

Sequence G: *Responding to Grammatical Features*. This sequence is concerned with teaching the child to recognise tiny 'grammatical' words or sounds which influence the meaning of a sentence.

The other areas of development (Gross Motor, Fine Motor and Personal and Social) are also divided into sequences of related skills.

The sequences will show you how one skill leads on to another and how a child's existing skills can be built on and extended to enhance her development.

Just as children may be more advanced in some areas of development than in others, within each area of development a child may be more advanced in some sequences than in others. Like the age levels, the sequences will help you to identify precisely your child's weak and strong areas. They will allow you to be more flexible in choosing new goals for your child. You will be able to extend her strong areas, as well as helping her to make progress in difficult areas.

HOW TO USE THE D.S.I.

To assess your child using the D.S.I., you will present her with a series of activities, following the method described for each item, and *observe* her as she completes each one. If she completes an activity to the required standard you will record a *plus* (+) — or a tick, or whatever you like! — on the checklist opposite that item.

You will notice that several columns are provided on the right side of each checklist. Use the left column for your first assessment, putting the date at the top. You can then use the other columns for later assessments. This will make your child's progress very clear.

There are several things to think about before you begin entering those pluses in the columns. Because assessment requires careful planning you will first need to plan *what to assess*. Next, check *how to assess* each item. Finally, you will need to assemble any *materials* that are needed for the assessment.

Time spent in planning will save time during the assessment itself. If you know exactly what you are looking for, you will be able to assess many items without putting any special time aside at all. And you will be able to plan special assessment sessions that will be helpful to you and fun for your child.

Plan to spread your assessment over several days, doing just a little each day. At Macquarie, the teachers allow about six short sessions for the active preschool children, and a little less time for the younger children.

What You Will Need

You will need the *D.S.I. checklists*, to be found in Book 8. For each item you plan to assess, refer to the detailed notes for that item in Books 4, 5, 6 and 7.

The notes on How to Assess will tell you why each item is important, how to go about assessing it and what materials you will need. They will also tell you the standard at which your child should complete each activity in order to score a plus.

DECIDING WHAT TO ASSESS

Plan to assess your child's current level of ability in every sequence that is relevant to her. If your child is still a baby, there may only be one or perhaps two sequences that are relevant to her within each area of development, or checklist. If your child is older and more active, there will be several different sequences to consider within each checklist.

Remember that within each sequence, the skills are arranged in the order in which they are generally acquired.

> The basic rule of assessment is to *assess your child on each sequence until you find the point in that sequence where she begins to have difficulty.*

In other words, you must find the most advanced item in each sequence which your child can complete to the required standard, and hence the earliest item in each sequence which she cannot yet complete.

The first thing to decide is where to start. Parents have an advantage here over professionals who are meeting a child for the first time because they know enough about their children to pick a likely starting place. It is a good idea to start each session with an activity you know your child can do well. This will give her a sense of achievement and encourage her to try something new. Then move on to an item about which you are less sure. A professional who does not know a child well will often start by presenting materials which can be used at a number of different levels. Blocks are useful here. On a first meeting with a 2-year-old the tester might start by suggesting she builds a tower of six blocks. If this proves too hard, she might suggest a tower of two blocks. If this is still too hard, she might try banging the blocks together. If the tower of six blocks proved to be easy for the child, the tester might suggest a tower of eight blocks, or perhaps one of the more advanced imitation skills, such as building a train or a bridge. In this way, the tester develops a 'feel' for the child's level of ability and is able to present other appropriate items.

Here is a procedure to follow as you plan what to assess.

1. **Decide what sequences are appropriate to your child.** This is largely a matter of commonsense; if your child is not yet responding to gestures and simple directions (Sequence RL.B) there is little point in assessing her on Sequence RL.F: Responding to Directions Involving Location Words. But do always give your child the benefit of the doubt — she may surprise you!

2. **Read through the notes on each sequence.** If you are assessing for the first time, we suggest that you read the introductory notes at the beginning of each sequence, as well as the notes on

the items you plan to assess, so that you can see how the different items relate to each other.

3. **Decide where to start assessing in each sequence.** Begin with an item that you *know* your child can complete successfully. *Remember that most children are uneven in their development.* You will probably need to assess your child at a more advanced level in some sequences than in others.

4. **Plan to continue assessing within each sequence until you reach the point where your child begins to have difficulty.** It is this information that will tell you where teaching should begin.

CHANGING AND ADAPTING THE ASSESSMENT ITEMS

Most of the materials needed for assessment are quite straightforward, but some may prove hard to find. Or perhaps your child has a physical disability which would prevent her from completing an activity in the way it is described. Feel free to adapt the materials or methods to suit your particular needs. To adapt an item, think about the *basic, underlying skill* that it is designed to test. The notes about each sequence in general, and each item in particular, will help you here. Then think of another way in which you could assess your child's ability to perform that skill.

It is sometimes necessary to adapt materials or methods when a child takes strong dislike to a particular activity. If your child turns and runs at the sight of a ball, for instance, you might need to assess this aspect of her co-ordination with a beanbag or a soft toy that can be thrown and caught.

HELPING YOUR CHILD TO SHOW YOU HER BEST

At assessment time you want to discover the very best your child can do. Here are some guidelines for helping your child to show you her best, while at the same time making things easier and more interesting for *you*.

1. **Plan short sessions.** Short sessions, spread over a couple of weeks, are preferable to long sessions, which may tire your child and prevent her from showing you her best.

2. **Plan varied sessions.** Alternate different kinds of activities — listening activities and 'doing' activities, tasks which use small fiddly objects and tasks which use bigger toys, and so on.

3. **Start and end each session on a note of success.** A sense of achievement will motivate your child to keep on trying, and to try again in the next session.

4. **Follow a difficult task with an easier one.** This will help your child to relax and get over any frustration.

5. **Vary the setting.** Some items are easiest to assess in a highchair or at a table. Others are easier on the floor, or outside. Perhaps you could combine some Gross Motor assessment with a visit to the park, or assess her puzzle skills at playgroup or preschool.

6. **Assess self-care skills at the appropriate time of day.** Your child will probably be much happier to show you how she can take off her T-shirt if there is a logical reason for doing so. This saves time for you, too.

7. **Involve friends and family in your assessment.** Take advantage of the presence of playmates and family members to observe your child's play skills and interaction with others and to encourage her to try activities which don't appeal to her.

8. **Memorise the items you plan to assess each day.** This will allow you to give your full attention to your child. We have found at Macquarie that many children are put off by being followed around by an adult with a book and a pencil!

9. **Be flexible.** Change your plans if you feel you are getting nowhere or if your child surprises you by what she can do. If you are uncertain about a result, try the item again another time.

SOME QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Here are some of the most common questions asked about assessment.

How long should assessment take? Depending on the age, ability and personality of your child, and your own commitments and responsibilities, it may take three days or three weeks to complete your assessment, doing a little each day. There is no rule about this, so take your time. You will, of course, be keen to start teaching, but what you are doing now is teaching *yourself* about your child's abilities and needs. Feeling pressured can interfere with *your* learning, just as it can interfere with your child's.

How strict should I be while I'm assessing my child? Be as firm with your child as you would normally be. You may feel that you need new strategies for dealing with your child's behaviour but wait until you have finished your assessment before trying something new. Knowing exactly what she will do now will give you a basis for comparison later, so that you can evaluate any new approach that you may try.

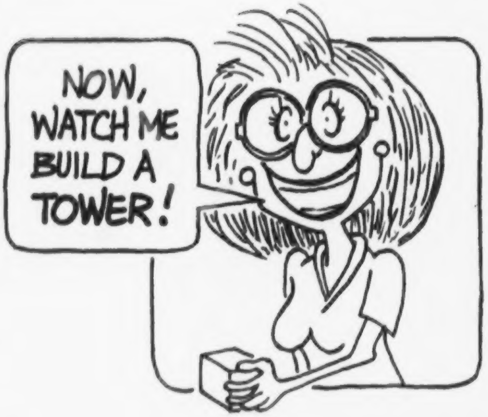
I seem to have two sets of results: one for what my child can do, when she chooses; and another for what my child will do, when I ask her. What now? It is important that children learn to use their skills at the appropriate times, or when asked. But the things you see her doing of her own accord also provide useful information. You will be able to use both sets of results, and we will talk about how in Chapter 2.

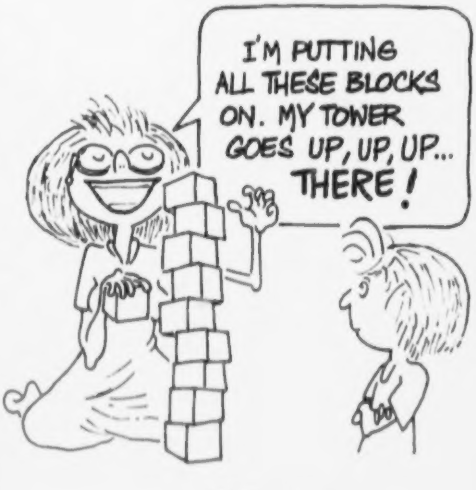
I can only get my child to do things for me if I give her lollies. Should I give them to her during assessment? Yes. We don't suggest that you make any changes in the way you relate to your child at this stage, except perhaps to be especially aware of the importance of praise and encouragement. If you want to stop the lolly system, you can look at that later on.

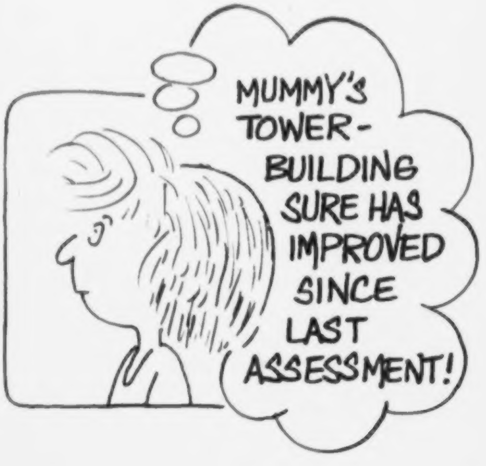
My child will not stay still long enough for me to assess anything. What can I do? You will have to rely largely on observing what your child does spontaneously. Try playing with the assessment materials yourself, while encouraging her to watch you. Then see if she makes an attempt to copy what you have done. We suggest that you refer to the Attending Checklists in Book 3, Chapter 2. Chapter 6 in this book, *Behaviour Problems and How to Avoid Them*, may also help you.

My child is severely disabled and only looks at me fleetingly. Can I assess her? Yes. No matter how little she can do, you will discover something that you can build on. Concentrate on the early stages of the D.S.I., and most importantly, on Book 3, Chapter 2, *Teaching Language to the Preverbal Child*.

How should I react when my child cannot do a task? Praise your child for trying. If a task is obviously too hard, help her to finish it, and show her that you approve of her attention. Then present something easier. You would not, of course, score a plus in an instance where you helped your child to finish.


NOW, WATCH ME BUILD A TOWER!


I'M PUTTING ALL THESE BLOCKS ON. MY TOWER GOES UP, UP, UP... THERE!


MUMMY'S TOWER-BUILDING SURE HAS IMPROVED SINCE LAST ASSESSMENT!

I am chiefly concerned about one particular area of my child's development. Do I need to carry out a complete assessment? If your child has a specific learning difficulty, you will be most concerned about her development in this area. We suggest, however, that you assess your child across all areas. This will ensure that you have not overlooked any other problems, and will help you to identify strengths which could be developed and extended, to the satisfaction of you and your child. The boundaries between the different areas of development are rarely clear-cut. We divide them up largely for convenience, to help us 'find our way' among the hundreds of early childhood skills. There are significant overlaps between Gross Motor and Fine Motor, Communication and Social Skills and, of course, Receptive and Expressive Language. There are also considerable overlaps between the different sequences with each area. Look closely at your child's problem area to see how it might relate to other aspects of her development.

Once I have finished this first assessment, will I need to assess my child again? We suggest that you reassess your child every three months, for the following reasons:

- Regular assessment helps you to see progress — rewarding for *you*!
- It gives you a chance to check that your child remembers skills she has learned earlier. If she has forgotten, you may need to give her some revision, and plan ways to provide practice so that she does not forget again.
- It lets you take an overall look at your child's progress and may confirm or change your priorities. Perhaps your child has made good progress in her Gross Motor development, but has made few gains in Fine Motor. Your new program could then devote more time to this weaker area. When you reassess you are looking not only at your child's progress, but at the balance of your teaching program.
- It gives you and your child a break from routine, as assessment involves looking at a wider range of activities than you could possibly cover in a teaching program. You might like to precede or follow the assessment with a complete rest from structured work.
- Assessment will never again seem as hard or as complicated as it does the first time!
- In between assessments, you can replace each skill that your child masters with something else that your child is ready to learn, using the sequences as a guide.

SUMMING UP

Assessment is ***planned observation***, to provide you with the information you need to teach your child.

To assess your child using the D.S.I. you will use:

- The D.S.I. checklists in Book 8
- The notes on how to assess each item, from the sequences in Books 4, 5, 6 and 7
- A selection of materials.

Using the D.S.I. you will assess your child's skills in:

- Fine Motor
- Gross Motor
- Receptive Language
- Personal and Social.

To assess your child's communication skills, or expressive language, refer to Book 3, which outlines the *T.E.L.L.* Communication Program.

Assess in short, varied sessions, using everyday situations and activities wherever possible.

Note that within each checklist are several different sequences.

Assess your child on each sequence relevant to her level of ability, until you find the point at which your child begins to have difficulty. This will be the starting point for your teaching program.

Plan ways to make assessment enjoyable — for your child, and for you.

CHAPTER 2

Deciding What to Teach

The Macquarie Program is based on the skills that the average child will learn in the first few years of life. More often than not, the child learns these skills from his parents. Parents know what to teach. Their own experiences, and sources of information available to all parents, help them to form realistic expectations of what their child should be able to do at each age level, and to guide their child towards these goals. This process is so basic to parenting that parents are frequently quite unconscious of what they are teaching, and why.

A child whose learning is slowed down by disability can benefit from a more structured, deliberate introduction of new skills. He may need to learn new skills in smaller steps — mastering, a little at a time, skills that his non-disabled peers may master all in one go. So the parents of the disabled child need to be especially aware of the steps by which children learn and the order in which new skills are attained.

The D.S.I. checklists that you used to assess your child will guide you in deciding *what* to teach your child. You may want to add some items, and remove others, depending on your child and your environment, but the checklists provide a core of skills on which your teaching program can be based. It is worth noting that most of the items on these checklists are things that parents teach their children anyway.

In this chapter, we talk about how to set up a program for your child. This program will consist of a small selection of skills — skills that your child is *ready* to learn, and *needs* to learn, now. It will be a *practical program*, too, one that will suit the time and resources that you have available, and fit in with the needs of the family as a whole. It will be an *individual* program, designed by *you* for *your* child.

SETTING OBJECTIVES

The objectives of your teaching program are the skills you want your child to learn.

The long-term aims that you hold for your child, we will call *goals*. We talk about setting goals later in this chapter.

The short-term aims, or specific skills that you want your child to learn in the immediate future, we call *objectives*. Objectives will help you in your work with your child in two ways:

- **Objectives tell you where you are heading,** so that you can plan teaching sessions and take advantage of spontaneously occurring opportunities for learning.
- **Objectives help you to recognise when the skill has been achieved,** so that you can move on confidently to a more advanced skill.

Objectives are always stated in terms of *what the child will do* when he has mastered the skill. They describe actions that we can observe. It is very hard to state confidently that a child *knows* something. It is much easier to see whether or not he *does* something.

When teachers take this approach, they are acknowledging the limits of their ability to 'read' the innermost workings of the child's mind. They choose to avoid making assumptions about what they cannot see. Now parents have much more right than teachers to make such assumptions and it is natural that they should do so. But we suggest that it can be helpful to parents to be aware of the difference between what they intuitively assume and what they can see from their child's actions. If you are a parent, you will continue to ponder about how your child thinks and feels, but decision-making will be easier if you also consider what your child actually does (or what you aim for him to do), and how he *demonstrates* his thoughts and feelings.

Box 2.1 Two Ways of Writing Objectives

- Billy knows that the ball has been hidden under the cup.
- Billy lifts the cup to find the ball.

- Jan knows what a knife is for.
- Jan cuts soft food with a knife and spreads butter on bread with a knife.

- Chrissie knows her colours.
- Chrissie correctly names red, blue, green and yellow.

- Geoffrey (aged 2) is a tidy eater.
- Geoffrey feeds himself with a spoon without spilling.

- Mario (aged 5) is a tidy eater.
- Mario puts the knife and fork in the middle of his plate when he has finished eating and wipes his mouth with his napkin.

- Georgia rides her tricycle.
- Georgia pedals her tricycle without assistance from the front steps to the gate.

Box 2.1 lists pairs of objectives. The second example in each pair has been expressed in terms of what the child will be able to do when the skill has been mastered. The first example has not. As you read them, consider which would make it easier for you to assess the child's progress and to decide when the objective has been reached.

You will notice that our more specific objectives use more words — those in the first example may at first seem simpler. But the objectives in the second example use more words *because they give more information*. Depending on the nature of the skill, they state the standard at which it is to be done or the conditions under which it is to be done.

When an objective is very general, such as 'Geoffrey is a tidy eater', it could be interpreted in many different ways, depending on the child's stage of development. 'Tidy' eating obviously means something very different for a toddler than for a 5-year-old. We all know what we mean when we use such phrases, but we can lose sight of our original intentions as time goes by, and may fail to recognise progress as it is made. Objectives state *short-term* aims and should describe skills which the child can be expected to master in the near future.

You may wonder why we phrase all our objectives in the present tense: 'Geoffrey *is*' instead of 'Geoffrey *will*'. We like this phrasing because it allows us to say: 'Ah, yes' This describes Geoffrey *now*. He *is* feeding himself without spilling. He has reached this objective.' But this is a matter of choice — you can, of course, use the future tense if you prefer.

Let's look again at the main features of specific objectives:

- Objectives state *what the child will do* when he has mastered the skill.
- Objectives *give information* about when, where and how a skill will be used, where these factors are relevant.
- Objectives state a *short-term aim* for the child — the next step which your child needs to achieve.

CHOOSING OBJECTIVES

There are three main factors to consider in choosing objectives for your child:

1. *Your long-term aims or goals for your child* — what you want your child to do in the future.
2. *The results of your child's assessment* — what your child can do now.
3. *The time and resources available to you* — what you think you can manage, given your individual circumstances.

Your Goals for Your Child

These are a very personal affair. Some parents have few clear goals in mind and this can be a wise position. You may well be quite uncertain about how your child's disability will affect him. Setting goals that turn out to be beyond the child's reach can lead to disappointment. If a goal is too limited, the low expectations of those around him may hinder a child's development. But goals do have an important role in giving parents a sense of purpose and direction. If you had no goals at all it is unlikely that you would be looking at this book.

You can avoid the dangers of expecting too much or too little by reconsidering your goals from time to time and changing them as your child changes. This is something which caring parents do naturally, whether their children have disabilities or not.

Choose objectives which are compatible with your long-term goals and be aware of how they fit in. The notes on individual skills in Books 4, 5, 6 and 7 will help you to see why you might choose to teach a particular skill, where this purpose might otherwise be obscure.

The Results of Your Child's Assessment

Your child's assessment will show you the skills that your child is ready to learn next.

To set Expressive Language objectives, use your language checklists as described in Book 3. To set objectives in the remaining areas of development (Gross Motor, Fine Motor, Receptive Language and Personal and Social) refer to your completed D.S.I. checklists in Book 8.

Find the first skill within each sequence that your child has not yet mastered. (Remember that there are several sequences within each checklist.) List all these skills as possible objectives for your child.

As an example, let's take the Receptive Language Checklist of a child, Tony, who has reached (approximately) the 2-year-old level of development. (See Box 2.2.)

We can see at a glance that Tony has progressed further in some sequences than in others. This is quite usual — most children progress more quickly in some areas than they do in others, depending on their interests and experiences.

Tony's mother began by identifying the next skill to be learned in each sequence on which Tony has already made some progress. This gave her the following list of possible objectives:

RL.D.39: Follows two-word directions, choice of two objects and three actions.
RL.C.47: Points to four objects when described by function, choice of six.
RL.E.55: Selects *little*, choice of big and little.
RL.A.64: Attends to a story for 10 minutes, one to one.

She also noted that there are two sequences which begin at the 2–3 years level, on which Tony has not scored at all yet. Tony could perhaps begin to work on these sequences, so she lists the first item of each as a possible objective:

RL.F.57: Places an object *on* and *under* an upturned cup when asked.
RL.G.61: Discriminates regular plurals.

Tony's mother did the same for all his D.S.I. checklists and she identified possible Expressive Language objectives as set out in Book 3, Chapters 2 and 3. Now she had a long list of skills, all of which Tony was ready to learn. But how could she possibly teach all these skills at the one time, when she had other children to attend to and commitments outside the home?

Time and Resources

The third factor to consider in setting objectives for your child is the time and resources available to you. There are no hard and fast rules about how much you should teach. As a general rule, a few skills taught thoroughly and carefully help a child as much as, if not more than, many skills taught in a hurry by over-pressured parents or teachers! Skills left aside now can always be taught later on.

The following points may help you decide how much you are able to teach.

1. **If your child is in the very early stages of learning:** If your child is still a baby, you need set very little special time aside. Most of the exercises can be done as part of your general care of, and play with, your child.

2. **If your child is older and more active:** You will still find that many objectives can be taught during play or normal household activities. Special teaching sessions are best kept short — for your child's sake, as well as your own. Most preschoolers tire if teaching sessions extend beyond 15 minutes. An ideal to aim for would be:

- 15 minutes for Fine Motor and Receptive Language exercises
- Two 10-minute sessions for Gross Motor exercises (less once your child is walking well)
- 15 minutes for a play session where you concentrate exclusively on your Expressive Language objectives (though these can be taught during everyday activities).

This adds up to a maximum of 50 minutes a day. Still, 50 minutes can be hard to find in a busy schedule and you can help your child to progress with less, especially if you find ways to involve your child's objectives in your everyday activities.

Box 2.2 Tony's Receptive Language Checklist

18 months to 2 years

RESPONDING TO DIRECTIONS INVOLVING ACTION WORDS

D.29: Given one object, carries out two different actions when asked. +
D.30: Given one object, carries out three different actions when asked. +

CHOOSING BETWEEN ALTERNATIVES: OBJECTS AND PICTURES

C.31: Points to four body parts when named. +
C.32: Chooses an object when named, choice of four. +
C.33: Chooses three items of clothing when named. +
C.34: Chooses a picture when named, choice of two. +
C.35: Chooses a picture when named, choice of four. +
C.36: Points to seven body parts when named. +

LISTENING AND ATTENDING

A.37: Listens to a complete short story. +

2 to 3 years

RESPONDING TO DIRECTIONS INVOLVING ACTION WORDS

D.38: Demonstrates 10 action words. +
D.39: Follows two-word directions, choice of two objects and three actions. −
D.40: Follows two-word directions, choice of three objects and four actions.
D.41: Follows two-word directions, choice of four objects and four actions.
D.42: Follows two-word directions involving two actions and two objects within each direction.

CHOOSING BETWEEN ALTERNATIVES: OBJECTS AND PICTURES

C.43: Points to 10 body parts when named. +
C.44: Points to self when asked 'Where's . . .?' +
C.45: Chooses a picture when named, choice of nine. +
C.46: Points to two objects when described by function, choice of four. +
C.47: Points to four objects when described by function, choice of six. −
C.48: Points to six objects when described by function, choice of six.
C.49: Shown five different food items, selects three when named. −
C.50: Shown five different animals, selects three when named. −
C.51: Shown five different furniture items, selects three when named. −
C.52: Responds to 'Give me . . . AND . . .', choice of four objects. −
C.53: Responds to 'Bring me . . . AND . . .', from anywhere in the room.

RESPONDING TO DIRECTIONS INVOLVING ATTRIBUTE WORDS

E.54: Selects *big*, choice of big and little. +
E.55: Selects *little*, choice of big and little. −
E.56: Selects on basis of size, given two pairs of objects.

RESPONDING TO DIRECTIONS INVOLVING LOCATION WORDS

F.57: Places an object *on* and *under* an upturned cup when asked. −
F.58: Places an object *in* a receptacle when asked. −
F.59: Takes an object *out of* a receptacle when asked. −
F.60: Places an object *in, on, under* when asked.

RESPONDING TO GRAMMATICAL FEATURES

G.61: Discriminates regular plurals. −
G.62: Discriminates possessive forms. −
G.63: Discriminates 'not', shown two objects. −

LISTENING AND ATTENDING

A.64: Attends to a story for 10 minutes, one to one. −

3. **Fit objectives to the time available.** The number of objectives you can teach in the time you have available will depend on the objectives you choose, your child and your 'style' as a teacher. It may take some trial and error to work this out. As a very rough guide, you might expect to cover four or five activities from the Fine Motor and Receptive Language checklists in a 15-minute session, two or three Gross Motor objectives in a 10-minute session, and perhaps three Expressive Language objectives in 15 minutes of play. The Personal/Social skills are a different issue, as they are taught solely in natural settings, at the appropriate time of day. Please treat these figures as no more than a starting point from which you will go on to discover the system that suits *you*.

4. **Involve all the family.** Other family members are often happy to take the responsibility for teaching one particular objective — especially when they are involved in the decision of *what* to teach.

5. **Involve preschool staff and childminders.** There may be particular objectives where people outside the home could help you. You are not asking for *extra* time to be spent with your child; rather, you are asking that time that would be spent in any case be used in a particular way. In years of involvement with preschool teachers, we have found them very willing and able to help, and to work in with the goals and objectives of individual families.

6. **Arrange your objectives in order of priority.** The skills with the highest priority are those that come earliest within the sequences or those that your child needs most. The others can be left until later. The notes on each skill in Part Two may help you to decide priorities.

7. **Select a balanced and interesting program.** Teaching sessions should be varied, however brief they are. Consider this factor at the same time as you consider your priorities. Include at least one skill in your program that will extend your child in an area of strength. Chances are he will enjoy this activity — and enjoyment will help your child to learn.

8. **See how you go.** All teachers must rely to some extent on trial and error. Make a plan and stick to it for two weeks. (Any less, and you will not give yourself or your child time to adjust.) You will then be able to consider whether changes are needed — to what you are teaching, or where, or when.

Some changes to your daily routines will be inevitable if you are to follow the *Small Steps* program, but it should not cause any major disruptions to your family life. You must respect your own judgment about how much extra work you can take on without prejudicing the well-being of your family or yourself. Certainly your disabled child will benefit from time spent on his objectives, but he would lose emotionally, and learn less effectively, if his program led to tension in those around him. If your circumstances allow you to work on only one or two objectives at a time, your child will still gain from your efforts to help him.

WHEN AN IN-BETWEEN STEP IS NEEDED

Let's assume that you have identified possible objectives from your child's assessment and have decided which ones you can teach now. There is one more factor to consider before teaching can begin.

For each objective, ask yourself: Does my child have a good chance of reaching this objective in the near future, or is an in-between step needed?

The steps within each sequence of the D.S.I. have been designed to allow the moderately disabled child to make steady progress. But your child may be more severely disabled, and most children have difficulty with one area or another, however quickly they learn in their areas of strength. At some point, you are bound to come across a step that seems just too big for your child — too much for him to learn all at once.

The answer is to set smaller, in-between steps that take your child little by little towards your main objective.

You will find in the notes in Books 4, 5, 6 and 7 that for some of the skills in the program we have suggested a series of in-between steps. But where these are not provided, you can develop a series of steps yourself, using a technique called *task analysis*. You will also find task analysis helpful when you want to teach your child a skill that is not included in the D.S.I.

There are two main methods of task analysis. The first method suits tasks which are composed of a series of separate actions such as cleaning teeth, or milking a cow. Here is how to analyse a complicated task.

1. **Perform the tasks yourself.** Do this several times, noting each separate action that is required to complete the activity.

2. **Write down each separate action needed to complete the task.** Sometimes this is easier if you watch someone else doing the activity.

3. **Arrange all the items in a suitable order for teaching.** There are three main ways to order the items: the order in which they naturally occur, the reverse order and from easiest to hardest. The reverse order is the order most commonly used, because it gives the child the satisfaction of completing the activity all by himself. If the task is taking off a singlet, and the first thing you teach him is the final pull, up and off, he will feel he has really achieved something right from the start. You can then go on to teach him to pull the singlet off his head and an arm, and so on. Each order has its advantages, so choose the one that feels right to you.

4. **Set the first item to be taught as your first objective.** As you teach your child to do this first step by himself, you will help him through the rest of the activity. Once he has achieved the first objective, introduce the second. The amount of the task with which you need to help him will decrease as he progresses through the steps you have planned.

The second method is suitable for the tasks which, while requiring few separate actions, are just too difficult for the child to manage. In this method, either the materials or the amount of work required is modified to make the task easier. Many of the sequences within the D.S.I. have been developed in this way. The child who is learning to thread beads, for example, learns first with large beads, then with medium beads and finally with small beads. The child who is learning to cut with scissors is required first only to snip, then to cut across a thin strip, then to cut across a square of paper, then to cut on a line and finally to cut out shapes. You can add extra in-between steps to suit your child and ensure steady progress.

There is plenty of scope for creative thinking in setting up a teaching program to suit an individual child. No book can take account of the exact nature of your child's needs and abilities. We urge you to add to and adapt the objectives listed in this program, and we hope that you will find this process interesting and enjoyable.

SOME SPECIAL PROBLEMS

Some situations necessitate a different approach. Here are some.

The Child Who Can But Won't

In the previous chapter, we talked about the child whose assessment results are affected by a refusal to do what his parents asked at assessment time. Let's take Brian as an example.

Watching him in play, Brian's parents observed that he could build high towers of six or seven blocks and put shapes into simple puzzles and draw simple lines and shapes with a crayon. But when they *asked* him to do these things, and others, Brian turned away or squirmed in his chair or threw the toys on the floor. The level of development shown by the completed D.S.I. was much lower than the level suggested by his play activities.

His parents knew that Brian's opportunities outside the home would be limited if he did not do what adults asked him to do. They felt it was in *his* interests that he should learn to comply. And, of course, it would overcome a great source of frustration for *them*! They decided that responding to directions was an important *goal* for Brian.

But what sort of directions would they give? As well as practical 'round-the-house' directions, they wanted to use some which would teach Brian new Fine Motor and Language skills. Should they start at the level shown on the D.S.I. or at a level which reflected the more advanced skills he used in spontaneous play?

As a general rule, children are more likely to attend to a task when there is a small degree of challenge involved. Even though Brian did not build a six-block tower when his parents asked him to, their observations told them that he *did* build such towers during spontaneous play. They decided to choose a slightly more advanced skill (building eight-block towers) for his new objective. They used this approach to create a whole new program for Brian.

Brian's parents were also particularly careful to include in his program some activities he was certain to enjoy. They listed 'Brian cuts dough' among his objectives. Even though it is not to be found in the D.S.I., they knew that Brian loved dough-play and would be sure to participate. This gave them opportunities, right from the beginning, to praise Brian for doing what they asked and to show him that good things could follow when he co-operated.

You will find more discussion of helping children to overcome behaviour problems in Chapter 6 of this book.

The Child Who Does Not Attend

Whether this is an aspect of your child's level of development, or part of a broader behaviour problem, you will need to teach your child to attend before you can teach anything else. Attending is usually indicated by eye contact, but even the severely visually handicapped child can learn to focus his intact senses on a person or object.

There are three crucial stages in learning to attend:

- Attending to a person — usually by maintaining eye contact
- Attending to an object or sound
- Attending to an object *with* a person.

In attending to an object *with* a person, the jargon is 'joint attention'. The child might glance up from time to time from studying an object to see if his companion is looking too or he might follow his companion's glance or pointed finger to see for himself what is there.

If your child does not demonstrate these skills, they will be your first objectives and, with the exception of some Gross Motor objectives, your only ones. These skills are basic to all the social, communication and Fine Motor skills that follow. Teaching methods are discussed in Book 3, Chapter 2, *Teaching Language to the Preverbal Child*, and in the notes on Sequences FM.A, RL.A and PS.A in Books 5, 6 and 7.

The Child Who Has Completed the D.S.I.

The child who can do everything (or almost everything) in the D.S.I. but is still behind his peers can still benefit from the approach outlined in this program. You will need a more advanced curriculum or sequences of skills to work on and the list of resources in Book 1 may help you here.

The Child Who Is Attending an Early Intervention Program

The child who is already receiving a teaching progam from another source could be confused by contradictions in objectives or approach. We suggest that you discuss any aspects of this program that interest you with any professionals with whom you are involved.

SETTING OBJECTIVES IN BETWEEN ASSESSMENTS

After your first assessment, you will set up a program, or group of objectives towards which you will work with your child. Your child will not, of course, master all these objectives at the same time. He will make more rapid progress towards some objectives than towards others.

Earlier we suggested that you carry out a thorough assessment of your child every three months or so. But if he masters an objective before it is time for a new assessment, you can easily replace it with something else he is ready to learn. Go back to your original assessment and consider including now any objectives that were put aside at that time. Or go on to the skill that follows the one your child has just mastered, using the sequences as a guide. Assess your child on the new skill before you start to teach it — he may surprise you by being able to do it already! If this happens, repeat the process until you find something which offers your child the right amount of challenge.

SUMMING UP

Keeping in mind your long-term *goals* for your child, the results of your child's *assessment* and the *time and resources* available to you, select *objectives* for inclusion in your child's program. Your objectives will tell you where you are heading, and help you to recognise when the skill has been mastered.

To select objectives from your child's assessment results:

- Identify the point in each sequence where the child begins to have difficulty.
- Identify the next skill to be taught.
- Break down the skill into smaller, in-between steps if necessary, using the technique of task analysis.

Consider, too, whether there are any new sequences which your child is now ready to begin.

Include in your program all skills which can be taught without putting special time aside.

For special teaching sessions, plan a selection of activities which are varied, interesting, and both strengthen your child's weaker areas and extend his stronger areas.

Select communication objectives by following the procedures outlined in Book 3.

SAMPLE PROGRAMS

Here are two sample programs — one for Kim, aged 11 months, and one for Georgie, aged 4½ years. As you will see, their situations are very different and no doubt they are both very different from yours. But perhaps it will help you to see how two mothers came to terms with their practical difficulties and set up workable teaching programs for their children.

Kim

Kim is an 11-month-old boy with Down's Syndrome who lives with his family in a small country town. His older sister, Kerry, is 3½ and attends preschool two mornings a week. His mother, Chris, is a trained nurse and works the night shift at the local hospital on weekends. His father, Mark, has his own small business and Chris helps him with the bookkeeping for an hour or so each weekday. Chris plays tennis once a week, when she can, and is rostered to help at Kerry's preschool once a month. Mark's parents live close by and are very supportive.

Chris assessed Kim using the D.S.I. and made the following list of possible objectives:

Gross Motor:
A.39: On tummy, gets to crawl position and rocks.
A.46: Stands at furniture, supporting with arms, and bounces.

Fine Motor:
E.35: Bangs two cubes together.
C.32: Finds a completely hidden toy.
B.31: Uses a pincer grasp to pick up a raisin.
D.37: Places large rings on a stick.
G.54: Turns pages of a cardboard book.

Receptive Language:
B.19: Locates family members when named. (She noted that she could perhaps start teaching RL.B.18 at the same time — locates familiar objects when named.)

Personal and Social:
B.17: Drinks from a cup with help.
A.20: Participates in peek-a-boo.
B.27: Bites and chews a biscuit.

Chris also assessed Kim's communication skills, as outlined in Book 3, Chapter 2. She found that his greatest need was the development of his *imitation* skills. He could imitate clapping and waving, but was not yet imitating facial movements or sounds.

Chris had two major concerns at this time. She was worried about Kim's eating skills: he could not yet drink from a cup, he was reluctant to chew and each meal took over an hour to complete. Her second concern was that she could not give to Kerry all the time that the 3-year-old seemed to want. She considered giving up her tennis game but the idea filled her with gloom and she realised that she needed time for herself too.

After some thought, and discussion with Mark, Chris found that most of the objectives she had listed could be taught in time she was already spending with Kim. Locating family members could be practised at mealtimes. The pincer grasp could also be practised at this time, as Kim was relatively happy to eat small pieces of banana and other soft foods. Banging blocks could easily be incorporated into playtimes and this would tie in with the imitation games she would play to extend Kim's communication skills. Turning pages was an activity in which Kerry could be involved too. For Gross Motor exercises, Chris planned to put aside 10 minutes a day. Mark agreed to give extra practice in the evenings and when Chris slept after her night shifts on the weekends.

Chris decided that she would be more relaxed about spending extra time with Kim, expecially at mealtimes, if she could count on spending a little time each day giving all her attention to Kerry. On mornings when Kerry was not at preschool, Chris planned to use Kim's sleep-time in this way. Mark's parents happily agreed to mind Kim for an hour several times a week to give Chris and Kerry extra time together. They also agreed to concentrate on peek-a-boo and hide-and-seek games in their play with Kim, thus covering two more objectives.

This added up to a very busy schedule and Chris decided to leave one possible objective — putting rings on a stick — until later. Kim's fine manipulation skills were progressing well, so this was not a high-priority area.

Chris's final program for Kim looked very much like the list of possible objectives above, with only one deletion, but it had required considerable planning to reach this point. Routines were reorganised and other people were 'enlisted' to help. Chris found that once her new system was under way, she was able to add a couple of more objectives to Kim's program and Kerry, who was getting 'special' time herself, was happy for Kim to have his 'special' time, too.

Georgie

Georgie's situation is very different from Kim's. Now 4½, she was first diagnosed as having learning difficulties in her second year, when her mother, Leonie, became concerned at her failure to walk or talk. Physiotherapy, a hearing aid and language therapy have helped Georgie enormously; she now walks well and talks in single words and simple phrases. But with her entry to school approaching, Leonie is concerned that Georgie is behind her peers in the things she can do, and wants to help her all she can.

Leonie is a single parent, with two older boys at school. She works 30 hours a week to supplement the money she receives from the children's father. Until now, her out-of-work hours have been largely taken up with attention to Georgie's physical and language problems. She finds that she can devote about 20 minutes each evening to work with Georgie. The staff at Georgie's day-care centre have always taken a special interest in her and they are happy to work in with any new program.

Leonie assessed Georgie and identified the following skills as possible objectives:

Gross Motor:

C.124: Walks down stairs, holding the rail, alternate feet.
E.131: Broad jumps 30 cm.
B.120: Balances on preferred foot for five seconds.
D.128: Catches a 15 cm ball with arms.
F.134: Steers a trike around wide corners.

Fine Motor:

F.126: Draws a person with at least three parts.
E.129: Cuts a 10 cm square in two.
H.101: Completes an eight-piece puzzle (unseen).
J.115: Selects colours, choice of four.
I.107: Sorts picture cards, choice of nine.

Receptive Language:

D.42: Follows two-word directions involving two actions and two objects within each direction.
F.85: Places an object *in front of/behind* another when asked.
E.75: Selects *long* and *short*.
G.63: Discriminates 'not', shown two objects.

Personal and Social:

A.74: Takes turns with other children.
C.89: Unbuttons large buttons.
D.97: Goes to the toilet independently when directed.
E.98: Cleans teeth with verbal directions.

Communication (from the checklists in Book 3, Chapter 3):

Two-word phrases: locations, attributes.
Three-word phrases: subject + action + object.
Requesting services with two-word phrases.

Leonie viewed this list with despair. How could she possibly hope to teach all these skills in the limited time available to her? After some reflection, she realised that even though Georgie was ready to learn all these skills she did not have to learn them all at once. She also saw that some skills were more important to her than others; some seemed more relevant to Georgie's immediate needs.

Leonie selected a small group of Fine Motor and Receptive Language skills to teach in her evening sessions. They were skills that she felt would be particularly helpful to Georgie at school: drawing, cutting, selecting colours, following directions and responding to prepositions. She discussed her ideas with the staff at the day-care centre, who felt that other children, besides Georgie, would benefit from special attention to jumping and balancing. They also agreed to reduce the help they gave Georgie with her toileting and to set up more activities which involved taking turns. Leonie's older son offered to give his sister extra practice at catching a ball. And Leonie knew from experience, and from her earlier work with a speech pathologist, that she could, with a little thought and planning, involve Leonie's communication objectives in *all* their interaction.

After a little time Leonie found that some of the objectives she had put off until later could be taught without putting special time aside. She was more conscious of how Georgie walked down stairs and she paid special attention to the puzzles she chose at the toy library. The assessment had made her more aware of Georgie's abilities and needs, and once she knew what Georgie was ready to learn, she found all sorts of opportunities for 'spontaneous' teaching.

CHAPTER 3

How to Teach

Teaching is the process by which we organise a child's environment to make it more likely that she will learn to do certain things and behave in a certain way. 'Environment' here has the widest possible sense and includes what we say and do before, during and after a particular event or action, as well as referring to the physical things around the child.

Learning is the process by which certain actions or responses become part of our overall behaviour, while others are abandoned or superseded. This applies whether we are learning to operate a computer, tie a shoelace or scream until we get our ice-cream!

We are teaching, and our children are learning, whether we are aware of it or not. In all our interactions with our children, whether in the clinic, classroom or home, we are encouraging some actions or responses and discouraging others. If you have spent time watching children at play, you will know that they will practise new-found skills over and over again, until they have got them 'right' and can move on to something else. They practise those actions which give them satisfaction. This satisfaction might come from interest in the activity itself or from the response it causes in others.

When we are unaware of the effect we are having on a child, it is easy to teach things we would not dream of teaching deliberately. When Roger tips up the potted fern all over the carpet, his mother shouts 'NO! NO! Bad boy!' She is trying to teach Roger *not* to touch the pot plants. But Roger *likes* the way his mother sounds when she shouts like that and the look and feel of the earth on the carpet are very exciting. Next time Roger sees a pot plant, it brings back satisfying associations, and over it goes.

In calling this chapter 'How to Teach', we mean how to teach, deliberately and constructively, the things you want your child to learn. The techniques we discuss below do not apply only to 'lesson time'. They can be used all day long. You will find that you are following many of these principles already — they will seem, and are, a matter of commonsense. Other techniques may seem more artificial and may involve some changes to the way you do things. Some, we hope, you will find useful, while others may not appeal. There is some room for choice about what techniques you use and how you use them. But there is no choice about whether or not to teach. Parents *are* teachers, and especially in the preschool years, children learn more from their parents and their home environment than from any other source.

This is not to say that everything your child is or does is a result of your teaching, whether unconscious or deliberate. Inherited characteristics play their part and a child's behaviour can be affected by disorders in, or damage to, her bodily systems. Nor do we wish to suggest that parents should have an instinctive knack for teaching their disabled child; like your child you need opportunities to learn. The field called Special Education has expanded so rapidly in the last 20 years that even professionals with plenty of resources at their disposal have difficulty keeping up. But the basics are not hard to grasp. Given information that is based on the recent research into how to teach disabled children, you can extend your existing teaching skills, and develop new ones, to the immense benefit of your child.

In Books 4, 5, 6 and 7 you will find information about how to teach specific skills to your child. In this chapter, we look at the *basic principles* of teaching. You will be able to apply these principles to anything you want to teach and you will be able to adapt the methods set out to suit your child and your own circumstances. The principles set out here have found widespread acceptance among special educators and have been used by parents and teachers in the Macquarie Program for the past 10 years to teach a wide range of skills to a diverse group of children.

Some skills are best taught in a structured teaching session in a quiet place, where concentration is focused closely on the task or activity and opportunity is provided to practise again and again. Other skills are best taught in everyday situations — as the need arises. In these cases, the normal hustle and bustle of the household is probably going on all around and repeated practice may be impossible or inappropriate. (Learning to clean one's teeth is an example; we shouldn't expect a child to do this five times in a row!) Whatever the context of the teaching, the principles remain much the same and you can adapt them to the opportunities available to you.

We will divide the teaching process into three stages:

1. What to do *before* the child acts
2. What to do *while* the child acts
3. What to do *after* the child acts.

Teaching can always be considered as a three-step process and each step — before, during and after — can be planned and, if necessary, changed to make learning easier. Put very simply, the teaching process is this:

1. Tell your child what you want her to do.
2. Help her to do it, if necessary.
3. Let her know that she has done well.

Of course, a great deal more can (and will) be said about each step. But if you keep this simple three-step structure in mind, the details that follow should fall into place and you will be able to see each technique we describe as a part of the whole.

WHAT TO DO BEFORE YOUR CHILD ACTS

It is crucial to get your child's attention before doing anything else. Once she is looking at you, you can prepare her in the following ways.

Giving Directions

You should:

1. Simply *tell* your child what you want her to do and *tell her simply*!

2. Use the same (or similar) words each time, so that she can learn what your direction means.

3. Match your directions to the step that your child is learning. 'Clean your teeth' will be fine once your child has learned the whole process, but while she is learning you will need to see teeth-cleaning as a series of small steps, each of which will need to be taught and will need a direction (such as 'Take your toothbrush', 'Open the toothpaste', 'Put some toothpaste on your brush' and so on). If you are clear about what your objectives are, you will be clear about what directions to give.

Of course, there is no need to make these directions sound like military orders! You are *giving information* to your child about what you want her to do.

Demonstrating

If your direction does not give your child enough information about what to do, show her as well. Make sure she is looking and demonstrate slowly and clearly. You might need to demonstrate only once, at the beginning of the session, or before every try.

Demonstrating is a useful technique because it gives your child the independence to act for herself and it shows her exactly what is required of her. But remember that you will want your child to be able to do most things without a demonstration, so demonstrate less and less frequently as she gets the idea.

Consider how you could use other members of the family or friends to provide models for your child. This can be fun for the child and is a good way to involve others in the teaching program. You could make your teaching session into a game where everyone has a turn.

WHAT TO DO WHILE YOUR CHILD ACTS

Your aim is for your child to carry out the task so well that you need to do nothing to help her! But when a new skill is introduced, she will almost certainly need some extra help. You can help her through what you say and/or what you do.

Giving More Information

In the jargon, this is called giving a 'verbal prompt'. By giving your child hints as she goes, you are telling her more about what to do and you are also encouraging her to keep trying.

Here are some examples of parents using this technique — note how they give directions and demonstrations first.

Mother: Let's build a tower.
Put the block on the block.
Tommy: (bangs block)
Mother: Look, I put block on block.
(demonstrates)
Your turn.

Tommy: (tries, but the block falls off — Tommy has not lifted it high enough)

Mother: That was a good try.
Try again.
(as Tommy begins to tire)
Block goes up . . . up . . . and PUT!

Father: Look, Millie, Daddy draws a circle.
You draw a circle.

Millie: (scribbles on paper)

Father: Circle goes round and stop.

Millie: (draws round and round, but does not stop)

Father: That's better — now try again.
(as Millie draws) Round . . . and . . . STOP!

Giving more information still gives your child plenty of opportunity to act independently. Once she is very near to achieving a task with verbal help alone, your extra directions can be phased out.

Giving Physical Help

In the jargon, this is called giving a 'physical prompt'. Physical prompts generally give more help than do verbal prompts, and they are very useful in the early stages when your child is just learning a new skill. Physical prompts vary from the slightest sign to substantial physical assistance. The trick is to give only the amount of assistance that your child needs, and no more. As she gets better and better at her new activity, you can reduce the amount of help you give her.

Let's look at some examples. We will describe the way in which two children learned new skills. The physical prompts are in bold type, and you will see that as the children came closer to meeting their objectives, the amount of physical help was gradually reduced.

Penny, aged 11 months, was learning to turn the pages of a cardboard book. Her mother gave a clear direction and showed her how, but in the beginning Penny needed more help than this. Penny's mother **separated one page** from the others with one hand, and with the other she **took Penny's hand** and helped her to turn the page. As Penny got the idea, her mother was able to reduce her assistance to **guiding Penny's hand from her wrist** and, after a couple of days, to **guiding her from the elbow**. Soon Penny was able to turn the page by herself, as long as her mother separated the page for her. Penny's mother used demonstration and verbal prompts ('Use your pointy finger') to teach Penny to lift one page away from the others.

Kurt, aged 3½, was learning to put Lego blocks together. He had often watched his older sisters do this and had begun to try it for himself, but he needed extra help. At first, his father had to **hold both his hands and help him push** the pieces together. As Kurt got the feel of pushing, his father provided less force and **used his hands to help Kurt guide the pieces together**. As Kurt's aim improved, his father let him work independently, standing by to help when needed by **steadying Kurt's hands with a light touch**. At the same time he said 'Steady on', reminding Kurt to work slowly and with concentration. Soon an occasional verbal reminder was all that was needed.

Adapting the Materials

Another way to help a child achieve a task is to adapt the materials you are using or find substitutes that are easier to use. This approach is particularly helpful with a child who wants to act independently and resents continual physical assistance.

Penny's mother could have tried gluing small pieces of cardboard near the corners of the pages to hold them a little apart. Kurt's father could have started by using larger (Duplo) blocks, if Kurt could not use these already. Spoon handles can be wrapped with tape to provide an easier grip and toothpaste lids can be loosened slightly before the child is asked to unscrew them. The scope for such adaptation is endless. If your child has a physical handicap or has great difficulty in achieving Fine Motor tasks, you might like to make inquiries about technical aids at the occupational therapy section of the major district hospital.

Matching Your Objectives to Your Method

Whatever method you use to help your child learn her new skill, it is a good idea to state it in your objective. If you set a long-term objective, and work through a series of steps to get there, you might lose sight of the progress you are making. But if your teaching steps are written into your objectives, you will have the satisfaction of ticking them off more frequently and you will keep a clear idea of where you are heading.

Box 3.1 gives some examples of how long-term objectives can be broken down to reflect the teaching steps involved.

Box 3.1 Breaking Down Objectives

1. Long-term objective: *Imitates a vertical line.*
   Possible short-term objectives: Imitates a vertical line, hand held.
   Imitates a vertical line, guided from wrist.
   Imitates a vertical line, with verbal prompts.
   Imitates a vertical line.
2. Long-term objective: *Steps down from a 10 cm step.*
   Possible short-term objectives: Steps down, two hands held.
   Steps down, one hand held.
   Steps down, steadied by hand on shoulder.
   Steps down from a 10 cm step.
3. Long-term objective: *Puts a block on a block, using 2 cm cubes.*
   Possible short-term objectives: Puts the 2 cm cube on a 5 cm cube, hand steadied.
   Puts the 2 cm cube on a 5 cm cube, no help.
   Puts the 2 cm cube on a 3 cm cube, hand steadied.
   Puts the 2 cm cube on a 3 cm cube, no help.
   Puts the 2 cm cube on a 2 cm cube, hand steadied.
   Puts the 2 cm cube on a 2 cm cube, no help.

WHAT TO DO AFTER YOUR CHILD ACTS

What to do after your child has attempted a task can be summarised in one word: *reinforcement.*

The term 'reinforcement' is a piece of jargon which we hope you will find useful! It stands for what is possibly the most fundamental principle of learning and you will make use of it in everything you teach. It is this: Reinforcement is what makes an action rewarding and makes us want to do it again.

When we reinforce a child we let her know that she is doing the right thing, and *we let her know in a way that will give her pleasure*, so that she is likely to keep trying.

Reinforcement is important in all our lives. We all do things because we like the results. The pay-packet is an obvious example but reinforcement is usually more subtle than this. There are some things that we do because we enjoy them for their own sake — we like the way they make us feel. We may do something because it wins the approval of others or because doing it now will give us more time later to relax and enjoy ourselves. We might behave in a certain way because it gets the attention of someone who usually ignores us. Even an apparently unpleasant event, such as being shouted at, might be reinforcing when we feel isolated or ignored.

It is easy to assume that we are reinforcing a child's good behaviour because we are behaving in a way we think she should like. But the only way to be sure that our actions are reinforcing is to check the results. If the good things that we want to encourage are happening more often, then we are reinforcing successfully. If they are not, perhaps we are not being as reinforcing as we think we are.

How to Reinforce

The basic rule is this: Show your approval in the most natural way you can.

If your child becomes dependent on a very artificial form of reinforcement, her adjustment to new and different situations (such as preschool or school) will be more difficult because these forms of reinforcement are unlikely to be available to her there. But what do we mean by 'natural' and 'artificial'? What if the more natural methods don't work? A discussion of several different methods of reinforcement will help to answer these questions.

Praise

Praise is the most natural form of reinforcement and the most readily available. Everybody likes to receive it and (almost!) everybody is ready to give it. Happily, it is also very effective, in terms of encouraging the receiver to try for more. For many children their parents' approval, shown through praise, is all they want and need.

But praise, because it is so readily available to children, can become *too* familiar and thus lose its reinforcing power. Parents and teachers need to

Box 3.2 Thirty Ways to Say 'Very Good'

That's terrific.
I like the way you're doing that.
That's the best one you've done!
I just *love* that!
Good thinking!
Clever work!
You did it!
My goodness, you're doing well.
We'll have to tell Daddy about that one!
Better and better!
Marvellous!
Hooray!
Well done!
That's so nice I could eat it!
Well! How about you, eh?
That's just fine.
You're being so careful!
Great!
Ahhhhh, *lovely*!
A big clap for Suzie!
That's exactly right.
Wonderful!
That's it!
It's looking good.
That was a *special* one.
Wow, look at that!
I'm so *pleased*.
Excellent!
I like that, because . . .
That's really something!

be *creative* about their praise. Here are some suggestions.

1. *Vary your praise.* If you say 'good girl' 20 times a day, it will not seem special to your child. Look at Box 3.2: Thirty Ways to Say 'Very Good'. You will be able to add many more ways that are special to you and your child.

2. *Let your child know what you are praising her for.* This is especially important for older children but it is a good habit to get into right from the beginning. Your child should not feel that your feelings for her, as a person, are affected by your approval (or disapproval) of her actions. She should always be sure that you like *her*, but she also needs to know that you like her drawing or the way she brushes her hair or the tower of blocks she has built. Be *specific* in your praise.

3. *Emphasise your praise.* Someone can say to you or me 'You did that very well today' in the same tone of voice that they would use to say 'Your shoelace is undone', and we would still glow with pride because we understand the concept that is being expressed. But your child may not understand. She will understand you through your tone of voice and the expression on your face. This does not mean that you should leap out of your chair and jump for joy every time your child puts a block on a block. You must, of course, be true to your own personality. But even the most reserved person can achieve a difference in tone between approval, neutral comment and disapproval. Some difference, however subtle, is essential if children are to learn what behaviour is acceptable and what is not.

A final word about praise. Always include praise in your response to your child, even if you are using some other method of reinforcement as well. If you are using another method, see it as a way to teach your child the value of praise.

Touch

Most young children love to be cuddled, kissed, patted and stroked. Teachers must question their right to use touching extensively with older children but parents need have no such foibles — physical contact between parents and children is a natural and mutually rewarding experience. So if you and your child like exchanging cuddles along with praise, go right ahead!

Special treats

We refer here to special treats other than food — time with special toys, half an hour in the sandpit, a ride on the tractor — whatever your child especially enjoys. Such treats can, of course, be given spontaneously to all children from time to time and they can help to strengthen the sense of approval that is gained through praise.

If your child is not responding to praise and touch alone, special treats can be used systematically to help her to see that doing what you ask of her is worthwhile.

For a very young child, put the special toy or other treat in view while you do your work. Tell her that it is there for her when she has finished. An older child could perhaps simply be told of the treat that is planned. Remember to use praise as well, and when your child is responding to your directions, use the treat more and more infrequently (see the section that follows: When to Reinforce).

Like praise, treats may need to be varied. You might plan two or three that you can rotate.

Tokens

The problem with treats is that they are usually only available at the end of a session. Children may have difficulty keeping hold of the idea that the treat will come. They may expect it after just one try at a task, and be unwilling to go on practising. Tokens have the advantage that they can be given after every try.

A token is a symbol that can be saved and later exchanged for a special treat. Money is a kind of token and token systems used in classrooms are sometimes called 'token economies'. You could use counters or stamps on a chart or empty cotton reels; it really doesn't matter, as long as your child understands their significance.

To teach your child the value of tokens, you must initially make your treats very 'cheap'. Let her 'buy' her treat when she has collected just a few tokens. Later, you will be able to ask her to collect more tokens (say, 10) before she buys her treat. Some form of chart is very useful here because it lets her know how far she has to go.

Be sure to pair your tokens with praise, and encourage your child to find other sources of satisfaction. Your long-term aim will be to make the tokens less and less important, and finally, unnecessary.

Tokens and treats have an important role to play and in many cases they have been successful where all else has failed. But your child must be able to understand what they are for before they will work and thus they are of little use with very young or severely disabled children.

Food

You may already have reservations about using food for reinforcement and you are wise to be cautious. Penelope Leach, in her book *Baby and Child* (Penguin, 1979), suggests that parents should 'keep the emotional temperature down' in their attitude to sweets and snack foods:

> A child should not get potato crisps because he has been good any more than you would offer him cabbage for this reason. His ice-cream should not be withheld because he has been tiresome any more than you would refuse to serve him meat.

This is good advice. In addition, many disabled children have metabolic problems which make it necessary to watch their weight. In such cases the consumption of snacks should be carefully limited.

Despite these reservations, there *is* a place for using food as a reward. If your child does not respond to your praise and does not understand or enjoy a treat or token system, the use of food is worth considering. Most children find food of some kind reinforcing and some will comply with their parent's directions on no other terms. It is almost certain that your child needs to learn, more than she needs to be protected from food rewards.

Here are some suggestions for using food as a reinforcer.

1. *Treat this as a means to an end.* You are using food in order to teach your child new skills, *and* in order to teach her to respond to your praise and touch. *Always give praise as well as food,* and as soon as possible, start giving food less frequently (see notes that follow on When to Reinforce).

2. *Use the most nutritious food that your child will accept.* Don't use lollies if your child enjoys little cubes of cheese or sultanas or sips of fruit juice.

3. *Use the smallest portions your child will accept.* If you are using lollies, choose soft ones that can be cut up into smaller pieces.

4. *Try to limit your use of food reinforcement to certain times of day, or certain activities,* for example, a 10-minute structured teaching session at a table. Be sure to plan each day at least one activity that you can enjoy together where there is no thought of food and where you are building on your child's sense of *you* as a rewarding person.

A word about bribery

Many people react with horror to any suggestion of using treats, tokens or food as rewards. You, too, may see this as a form of bribery, and hence morally suspect. But 'bribery' implies an intention to corrupt — to induce another to do something he or she would normally consider unethical. When you offer rewards to your child, you are doing so not to corrupt but to teach skills your child needs to learn.

There are, of course, certain principles to be followed — principles which arise out of respect for a child's right to the most normal and independent life possible. It is essential that you begin to plan the phasing out of treats, tokens or food as soon as — or before — you start to use them. By pairing praise with these more artificial rewards, you are aiming to teach your child the value of praise itself, and hence to help her to respond to a form of reinforcement that will be available to her in the world at large.

A second principle is this: Pause often to evaluate what you are doing. Ask yourself: Is this really working? Is this helping my child to do (or try to do) the right thing more often? In Chapter 4 we suggest ways in which you can evaluate your approach and the kinds of changes you might consider.

One final point: Give your child plenty of opportunities to discover the *intrinsic* reinforcement she can experience through using her skills — that is, the enjoyment of doing things for their own sake. You can encourage this by making teaching sessions fun and by planning play activities where she can use her new-found abilities in exciting and different ways.

When to Reinforce

How to reinforce is one-half of the picture. We also need to consider *when* to reinforce.

Reinforcement should be an innate part of the relationship between parents and children, and, in general, should not be subject to any schedules. But there are circumstances in which you can help your child to learn by being aware of, and controlling, *when* you reinforce.

Early in the learning process, when your child is getting to know a new skill, reinforce every time your child achieves the task. And reinforce for trying, too.

When she shows you that she can do the new task, begin to reinforce less frequently. Be a little unpredictable about it; randomly scattered praise is more effective than a fixed schedule of every second try.

This will help your child to avoid becoming dependent on continual reinforcement or becoming immune to it because it is always there. Because you are still praising her from time to time, she will know that you do like what she is doing and she will want to hold on to your approval. Research shows that children are more likely to keep using a new skill if continual praise gives way to occasional praise once the skill has been mastered.

If you are using tokens, treats or food, you should start to give them less frequently as soon as your child will work happily without them, but do keep *praising* every time until your objective is achieved. You want your child to experience your praise or touch *without* other rewards attached. You can keep using a reward occasionally to back up your praise, until your child's behaviour tells you that it is no longer needed. You may need to repeat this process when a new task is introduced; try to make the treats or food less significant with each new task.

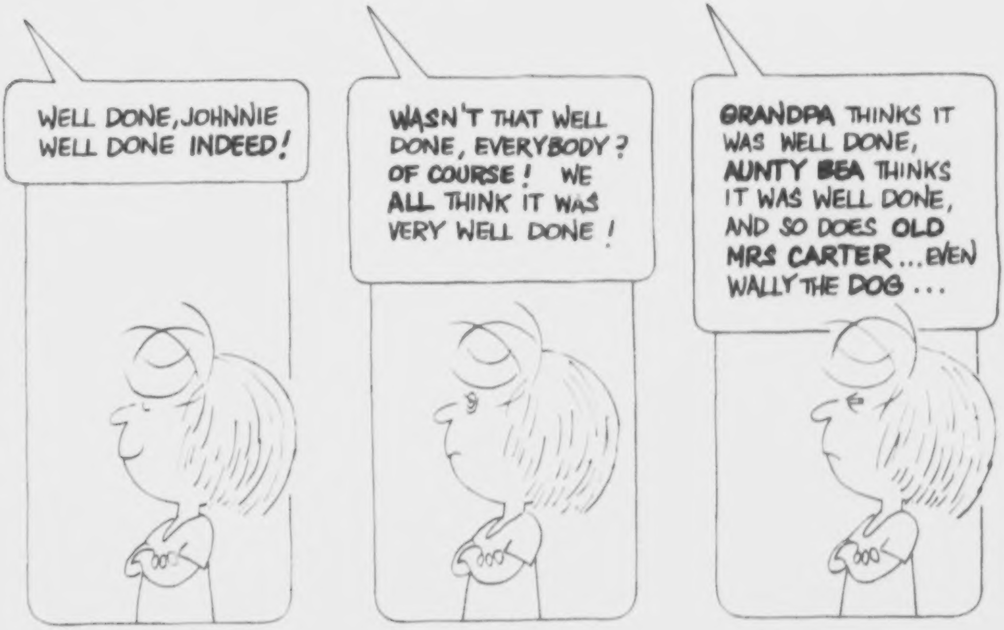
HOW LONG TO TEACH A PARTICULAR TASK

When tasks can be taught in a structured teaching session, we suggest giving about five tries at each task each time you teach, and continuing until your child succeeds in five out of five tries (100%) on any one day, or four out of five tries (80%) on two days in a row. But there are exceptions to this, and these are discussed in the next chapter.

For skills that are best taught as they occur naturally during the course of your day, it is helpful to have a very clear idea in mind (or on paper!) of the standard you are aiming for, before you start teaching (see page 2–9). Then you will easily recognise when the skill has been achieved and it is time to move on to the next step.

SUMMING UP

Here is a summary of the teaching methods discussed so far. BEFORE your child acts, you must *give a clear direction* and you can provide a *demonstration*. WHILE your child carries out the task, give as much help as your child needs, and no more. You can give more information, give physical help, adapt the materials or require her to do only a small part of the task herself. AFTER your child acts, reinforce her for trying or achieving. Avoid reinforcing errors or unco-operative behaviour.


WELL DONE, JOHNNIE WELL DONE INDEED!
WASN'T THAT WELL DONE, EVERYBODY? OF COURSE! WE ALL THINK IT WAS VERY WELL DONE!
GRANDPA THINKS IT WAS WELL DONE, AUNTY BEA THINKS IT WAS WELL DONE, AND SO DOES OLD MRS CARTER...EVEN WALLY THE DOG...

SAMPLE LESSONS

On the pages that follow, you will find transcripts of teaching sessions, each covering one task. In the right column we have identified the teaching method being used. These are not intended to be scripts to be followed; rather they are designed to illustrate some of the techniques discussed in this chapter.

Elsa
Child: Elsa, aged 16 months.
Teacher: Her father, Tim.
Elsa's objective: Gives object on direction: 'Give it to me.'
Materials: Variety of small toys — cars, blocks, animals.
Setting: On the floor in the living room.

Tim:	I've got a car. Brm-brm.	
	I give it to you.	Demonstration
	(gives car to Elsa)	
Elsa:	Brm brm.	
	(pushes car)	
Tim:	Yes, the car says 'brm'.	
	Elsa, give the car to me.	Direction
Elsa:	(ignores Tim, continues to play with the car)	
Tim:	Elsa, look!	Regains attention
	Daddy wants the car.	
	You give it to me.	Direction
Elsa:	(looks, does nothing)	
Tim:	(holds out open hand, almost to the car)	Gives physical help
	Give it to me, Elsa.	Direction
Elsa:	(puts car in Tim's hand, but does not release it)	
Tim:	(strokes the back of Elsa's hand gently, with his free hand)	Gives physical help
	Give it to me.	Direction
Elsa:	(releases car into Tim's hand)	
Tim:	Oh, thank you Elsa.	
	You gave me the car.	Reinforcement
	(gives a cuddle)	
	Now, I've got a block.	
	I give you the block.	Demonstration
Elsa:	(takes block and throws it away)	
Tim:	I've got a little cow.	Ignores unwanted behaviour
	Moo.	
	I give you the cow.	
	(gives cow to Elsa)	Demonstration
	Elsa, give the cow to me.	Direction
	(holds hand open)	Gives physical help
Elsa:	Ta.	
	(gives cow to Tim)	
Tim:	Oh, aren't I lucky?	
	I've got a cow. Thank you.	Reinforcement
	I'll give you this big horse.	

Ricci

Child: Ricci, aged 2 years.
Teacher: His grandmother, Elena.
Ricci's objective: Washes own face in bath.
Setting: Bath-time.

Elena:	Clever boy, you washed your hands. Today, you wash your face.	Direction
Ricci:	(chews flannel)	
Elena:	Watch Nana!	Regains attention
	I wash my face.	
	I wash my cheeks . . . my chin . . .	Demonstration
	There. Now Ricci wash face.	Direction
Ricci:	(dabs at face with flannel)	
Elena:	Good try, Ricci.	Reinforcement
	Now, wash your chin.	Direction
Ricci:	(dabs at cheek with flannel)	
Elena:	(touches Ricci's chin)	Ignores error
	There's your chin.	Gives physical help
	Wash your chin.	Direction
Ricci:	(washes chin)	
Elena:	That's great.	Reinforcement
	Now wash your nose.	Direction
Ricci:	(chews flannel)	
Elena:	Look at Nana.	Regains attention
	Here's my nose.	
	I wash my nose.	Demonstration
	You wash your nose.	Direction
Ricci:	(reaches towards Elena with washer)	
Elena:	You want to wash Nan's nose? O.K., you wash my nose. (bends down for Ricci to wash)	Elena retains Ricci's interest by following his lead
	There, my nose is clean.	
	You wash your nose.	Direction
Ricci:	(washes his nose)	
Elena:	That's it!	Reinforcement
	Rub round and round.	Gives more information
Ricci:	(rubs with the flannel)	
Elena:	Oh! There's my clean boy!	
	There's my lovely clean Ricci!	Reinforcement
	We wash Ducky now?	

Scott

Child: Scott, aged 3 years.
Teacher: His mother, Caroline.
Scott's objective: Builds a train with three blocks.
Materials: Six wooden cubes.
Setting: Scott's child-size table and chairs.

Caroline:	Look, Scott, I can build a train.	
	(puts three blocks side by side)	Demonstration
	I push my train. Toot toot!	
	Here are your blocks.	
	You build a train like mine.	Direction
Scott:	(builds a tower with his blocks)	
Caroline:	(removes tower quietly)	Ignores error
	Look, I'll make a train.	
	(does so)	Demonstration
	You make a train.	Direction
Scott:	(begins to build a tower)	
Caroline:	Block *next* to block.	Gives more information
	(takes Scott's hand and helps him put the block in place)	Gives physical help
	That's great.	Reinforcement
	You put this block on the train.	Direction
Scott:	(puts the third block in place)	
Caroline:	Oh, look! A train!	
	Scotty push it. Toot toot!	Reinforcement
	Let's make more trains.	
	Watch me do it.	
	(builds train)	Demonstration
	Your turn to build a train.	Direction
Scott:	(begins to put block on block)	
Caroline:	Look at mine.	
	Block *next* to block.	Gives more information
Scott:	(puts block next to block)	
Caroline:	You did it!	Reinforcement
	One more block.	Direction
Scott:	(adds other block)	
Caroline:	That's *your* train!	
	It's a lovely train.	Reinforcement
	Can it go fast?	

Isabel

Child: Isabel, aged 20 months.
Teacher: Her mother, Jean.
Isabel's objective: Drops a large marble into a cream bottle. Small cubes of cheese are being used as reinforcers. Yesterday Isabel dropped four marbles in the bottle out of five tries and was given praise and cheese each time.
Materials: Six large marbles, cream bottle, cheese cubes.
Setting: Isabel sits in her highchair, with Jean facing her.

Jean:	Here's our bottle, and here's a marble.	
	I put the marble in.	Demonstration
	Isabel take. (gives marble)	
	Put it in.	Direction
Isabel:	(looks away)	
Jean:	Isabel, look at Mummy . . . Look.	Regains attention
	Put the marble in.	Direction
Isabel:	(puts marble in)	
Jean:	Clever girl, Isabel.	
	You put it in.	
	(gives cheese)	Reinforcement
	Here's another marble.	
	Put it in.	Direction
Isabel:	(puts marble in)	
Jean:	Good putting!	
	(strokes Isabel's hair and gives cheese)	Reinforcement
	Look, here's another one.	
	Put it in.	Direction
Isabel:	(puts marble in)	
Jean:	You are clever today!	Reinforcement — praise only
	Put this one in.	Direction
Isabel:	(puts marble in)	
Jean:	I'm so pleased with you.	Reinforcement — praise only
	Try this one. Put it in.	Direction
Isabel:	(puts marble in)	
Jean:	You can do it! You can put!	
	(gives a kiss, then a piece of cheese)	Reinforcement
	Let's go and tell Daddy.	

Kate

Child: Kate, aged 4 years.
Teacher: Her mother, Gail.
Kate's objective: Walks a 10 cm elevated board, unaided.
Setting: The children's playground in the park. Kate is playing on the climbing equipment with her 6-year-old sister, Rebecca.

Gail:	Look, Kate, here's a plank.	
	Let's play on the plank.	
	Mummy do it?	
	(tries to walk along the plank, but can't do it)	
	Oh, dear, Mummy's too big for this plank.	
	Can Rebecca do it?	
	Kate, look at Rebecca.	
Rebecca:	Look at me, Kate.	
	I'm walking the plank.	Demonstration
	Come on, you do it.	
Gail:	Kate's turn.	
	Walk along the plank, Kate.	Direction
Kate:	(steps up, but clings to Gail)	
Gail:	OK, Mummy will help you.	Gives physical help
	Hold my hand.	
Kate:	(walks plank, hand held)	
Gail:	Clever girl.	
	You can do it.	Reinforcement
Rebecca:	That was pretty good, Katie.	Reinforcement
	Watch me do it.	Demonstration
Gail:	Kate's turn.	
	You walk the plank.	Direction
	I'll hold your shoulder.	Gives physical help (less help
	(balances Kate at shoulder)	than last time)
Kate:	(walks plank, steadied at shoulder)	
Gail:	You're getting better and better!	Reinforcement

THE MATCH-TO-SAMPLE GAME

We will finish this chapter by explaining an approach to teaching called the Match-to-Sample Game. This game can be played to teach many skills in which a child must learn to recognise the different members of a group. This group might consist of objects or pictures or colours or sizes or words — the possibilities are limitless!

In infancy, children learn to recognise the different members of their families and objects which are very familiar to them. Even if they cannot say the names of these people and objects, they can show their recognition by pointing, touching or looking in response to what other people say.

As children grow, they become exposed to a wider and wider range of objects and concepts. Many of these objects and concepts belong to categories, or groups, such as the group of *colours* or the group of *numbers*. The members of these groups are easily confused with each other. It is hard to grasp that something is red, when it can just as easily be blue, and it doesn't look anything like that other red thing over there!

The Match-to-Sample Game can be used to help children to recognise different members of categories or groups. It is an excellent technique to use when teaching concepts that can easily be confused.

Match-to-Sample involves setting a *sequence* of objectives, which take the child through the following basic steps:

1. Matching
2. Selecting with a sample
3. Selecting.

These steps are designed to help the child to develop a memory for the relevant feature or concept that you are teaching.

The first and third steps, matching and selecting, are included within the D.S.I. for most if not all the categories and concepts that children learn in the early years. When you use the Match-to-Sample technique, you introduce another step (or series of steps) between matching and selecting. You help your child to bridge the gap between matching and selecting by using a *sample*.

Let's think for a moment about the gap between matching and selecting. The essential difference is that selecting involves *language*, while matching does not. A child can match items together purely on the basis of *visual* or *tactile* information; she does not need to know what the objects are called. But when she selects, she must choose one item from a range of choices on the basis of *aural* information; she must respond to what somebody says to her. This is relatively easy when the words she hears relate to the most important and familiar people and objects in her life. She hears each name, as she interacts with the person or object, over and over again until the two become inseparably linked. But it is not so easy to respond to words that describe less tangible concepts or objects that she encounters only occasionally. When you say 'red', the child may have an idea of what *kind* of thing you are talking about, but it is hard for her to remember precisely which colour you mean.

The 'average' child will sort this out, in time. But for the disabled child, such confusion about what thing goes with what word can prove a real stumbling block, and an 'in-between' step, between matching and selecting, can make all the difference to happy and successful learning.

Here are some advantages of the Match-to-Sample approach:

- It strengthens the connection, in the child's mind, between the visual and/or tactile image and the relevant word.
- It trains the child to *remember* the crucial features of the object or concept and the word that describes them.
- Although it will help the verbal child to learn to say the relevant words, it does not depend on verbal language ability and can be used with the child who is not yet talking.

Elsewhere in *Small Steps* we talk about using Match-to-Sample to teach colours and shapes. Here we will use a fanciful example, to illustrate the broad applicability of the method. Let's suppose you want to teach your child to recognise 'star' and 'moon'. Your long-term objective is: *Selects star and moon, from a choice of two.*

For this objective we will extend the basic three-step sequence described above into five steps, each of which could be set as a short-term objective.

Step 1: Matches star to star, and moon to moon.

Materials: Several stars, several moons (all the same at this stage), two dishes.

Put the dishes on the table.
Put a star in one, a moon in the other.
Demonstrate matching, saying: 'I can put star with star.'
Give a star to your child. Say: 'You put star with star.'

Repeat for moon.
Continue for at least five tries, varying the order of stars and moons.

If your child reaches towards the wrong dish on any try, cover it with your hand and repeat your direction with emphasis. If she persists with the error, guide her hand towards the correct dish and repeat your demonstration before the next try.

Praise your child for each correct try.

Change the positions of the dishes occasionally, so that your child must really look.

Move to step 2 when your child's tries are 100% correct on any one day, or 80% correct for two days in a row.

Step 2: Selects moon and star, when shown a sample.

In this step the child can always see a sample of the object she is to choose. She is, in effect, matching to that sample.
Materials: Two identical stars, two identical moons. One of each pair will be your *sample*.

Put a star and a moon on the table.
Hold up your sample star. Say: 'Look, here's a star.'
Make sure your child looks at the sample.
Indicate the shapes on the table with your other hand.
Say: 'Point to (or 'find', or 'show me') the star.'

If your child selects the wrong shape, give her your sample and ask her to match it: 'Put star on star.'

If your child selects the correct shape, praise her: 'Great, you found star.'

Give five tries altogether, varying the order in which stars and moons are presented and changing the positions of the shapes on the table.

Move to step 3 when your child's tries are 100% correct on any one day, or 80% correct for two days in a row.

Step 3: Selects moon and star when sample is shown and then hidden.

Note that this step introduces the factor of *memory*.
Materials: As above, plus a small screen — a manilla folder is ideal.

Put a star and a moon on the table.
Place your screen upright in front of them.
Show your child a sample, as you did in step 2.
Say: 'Look, here's a star.'
When your child has had a look, put the star behind the screen, uncover the shapes on the table and say: 'Point to star.'
Your child will need to remember the word 'star' and the visual image for about a second before making her selection.

If your child makes the wrong choice, hold the star where she can see it, as you did in step 2, and repeat your direction.

Continue for five tries, varying the order of your direction and the position of the shapes on the table.

Move to step 4 when your child's tries are 100% correct on any one day, or 80% correct for two days in a row.

Step 4: Selects moon and star when sample is shown, and then hidden for three seconds.

The memory factor is extended in this step.
Materials: As above.

Proceed as above, but when you hide the sample, count three seconds before uncovering the shapes on the table and giving your direction.

It is most important that you keep your child's attention while you are counting. Maintain eye contact and try counting aloud. Make a game of this hiding and counting process — it can be a matter for laughing and joking — a bit like peek-a-boo!

If errors are made, try hiding the sample for shorter periods as a short-term measure.

Once your child reaches the standard described for the steps above, assess her to see whether she can select the shapes without the sample, as described in step 5. If she makes more than two errors in five tries, add another in-between step, in which you show the sample and hide it for five seconds before giving your direction. This will strengthen her memory of the shapes and the relevant words.

Step 5: Selects moon and star.

In this step, the child selects moon and star without first seeing a sample.
Materials: A moon and a star.

Put the moon and the star on the table.
Say: 'Point to the star.'
Repeat for moon, and give five tries in all, varying the order of the directions.

If errors are made, give extra practice with a sample. Once your child has succeeded in five tries on any one day, or four tries on two consecutive days, she has met the long-term objective.

You could now extend your child's concept of 'star' and 'moon' by introducing examples that differ in colour, shape, size or texture.

Groups of More Than Two

Many categories have more than two members. With colours, for example, we aim to teach children to select from a group of at least four. You have a choice: teaching all members of the group at once, or teaching them in pairs and bringing all members of the group together as a final step. Base your decision on your child's rate of progress. As a general rule, it is easier to learn new concepts in pairs. Watch your child's progress carefully to evaluate your decision.

Note that once children have learned to select a few members of a group, they will often learn new members more rapidly. You may have observed that small children can take months to learn the names of their first few colours and then will learn five more in a week!

Saying the Word

The steps outlined above do not require the child to say anything; she demonstrates her understanding by physical gestures. But if your child is talking, Match-to-Sample *will* help her to learn to say the appropriate words. *You* have been saying them, at every step along the way. Once your child can select members of a group without being shown a sample, you can start to ask questions — 'What colour is this?' or 'What shape is this?' and so on. She may need to repeat the names after you, to begin with, and this can begin at step 2, when you show the sample. Say: 'I've got a star. What is it?' . . . 'That's right, it's a star. Now, point to star.' By the time you have completed step 5, your child may be ready to answer a question without a demonstration.

Some Applications

The most usual applications, as we have said above, are with concepts such as *colour* and *shape*. *Numeral* recognition can be taught this way, as can *word* recognition. Match-to-Sample can be used to teach *big and little*, and *long and short*.

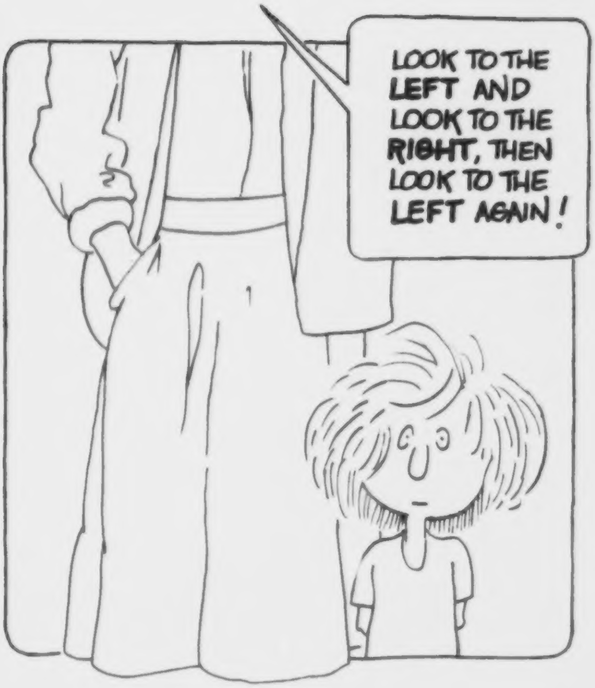
Severely handicapped children can be taught to recognise the names of familiar objects or pictures of familiar objects through the Match-to-Sample Game.

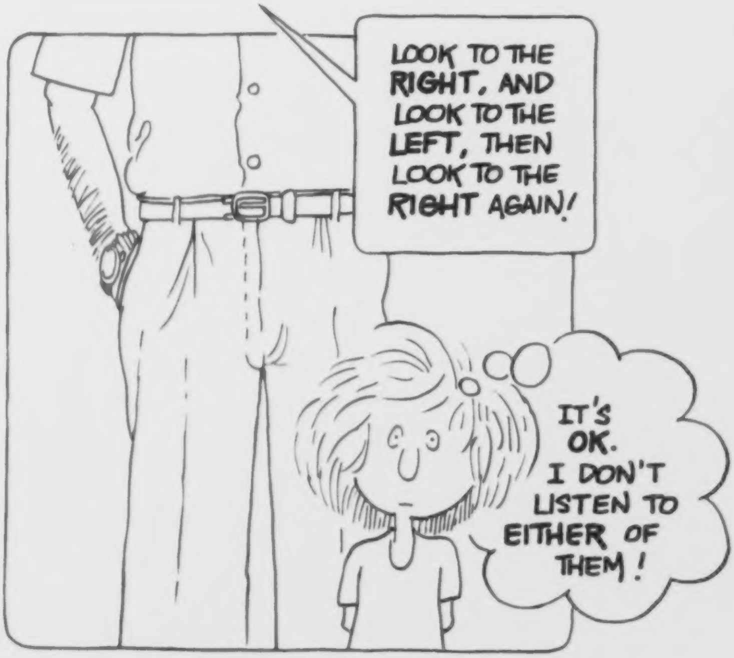
The steps described above require a quiet setting, at a table. But you can use Match-to-Sample in 'round-the-house' settings, as well, particularly in the teaching of colour. Keep some sample cards in your pocket, so that when you want your child to find something red (for example), you can produce the red sample and say: 'This is red. You find a red peg.'

MOVING ON

In the next chapter, we talk about how, when and why to make changes to your child's program. But the end of this chapter does not mark the end of our discussion of 'how to teach'. Making changes is an integral part of teaching, as are assessing, setting objectives, promoting play and coping with problem behaviours. Teaching is not confined to a few special techniques — it is part of everything you do with your child.

In Books 4, 5, 6 and 7 we offer suggestions about how to teach specific skills within the D.S.I. These suggestions are intended to be used *in addition* to the principles outlined in this chapter. If you are aware of the basic principles, you will be able to add to or alter the suggestions made in those books and you will be able to use them to teach anything you like, whether it is included in the D.S.I. or not.


LOOK TO THE LEFT AND LOOK TO THE RIGHT, THEN LOOK TO THE LEFT AGAIN!


LOOK TO THE RIGHT, AND LOOK TO THE LEFT, THEN LOOK TO THE RIGHT AGAIN!
IT'S OK. I DON'T LISTEN TO EITHER OF THEM!

CHAPTER 4

How, When and Why to Change Your Child's Program

Carl, 11 months old, was making progress in many areas, but he was having difficulty with putting rings on sticks. On the few occasions that his aim was right, he would pull the ring off before releasing it. His teacher kept trying, day after day, but after a while Carl was squirming and complaining each time the materials were brought out, and his teacher was thinking 'Oh no, here we go again'.

Paula, 4 years old, was learning to do puzzles. Things went smoothly until Paula started on puzzles with six pieces, and then the problems began. Her mother felt that the answer must lie in finding the right materials. Each day or two she produced a new puzzle — puzzles with knobs and puzzles without, puzzles with big pieces and puzzles with little pieces. Every possibility was tried. But each session would end with Paula confused and distracted, and her mother saying 'Oh, dear. I'll try and find a better puzzle for tomorrow'.

These examples illustrate two of the most common pitfalls which teachers can, and do, encounter. It may seem obvious that Carl's program needed a change of some sort, and that Paula's program was suffering from too much chopping and changing. But when you are in there, doing it, it can be hard to take a detached and accurate view of the situation. It is so easy to say 'I'll just try once more', and lose sight of how the 'once mores' are building up. And it is just as easy to rush into making changes after one frustrating session, and overlook the child's need for time to practise and adapt.

It is hard to find a balance between changing too little and changing too much. Yet none of us (and that includes highly trained professionals) can set the perfect program every time and it is most important that we learn to recognise when changes are needed.

In this chapter we will show you the procedures that are followed at Macquarie to help the staff decide when to change and what changes should be made.

KEEPING A RECORD OF PROGRESS

It is not easy to keep detailed information about every aspect of your child's development in your head. You may be able to do this more successfully than the teacher who has many children to consider but, then, you have many other things to think about too. Some simple method of record-keeping becomes a practical necessity. We will explain below some alternative methods for keeping a record of your child's progress.

The information that you collect in your record will help you to make decisions about how and when to make changes to your child's program, just as the nurse's observations of the hospital patient determine changes in treatment and the farmer's records of lambing rates influence decisions about changes to his stock. Record-keeping, whether by farmer, nurse or teacher, is a means to an end; it is a pointless exercise unless the records are *used* in some way to create a more favourable outcome.

There is no single, perfect way to keep such a record. The approaches we outline below can be added to, or changed, to suit your circumstances. If record-keeping is new to you, you might like to start by collecting information about just one or two activities, adding more as you gain confidence.

It is impossible to keep detailed records of everything a child does. We do not suggest that you follow your child around all day long with paper and pencil — far from it! Most records are based on *samples*. The nurse, for example, observes pulse and temperature every few hours unless the patient's condition calls for more frequent monitoring. The image of the healthy post-partum mother linked up to a monitoring machine is absurd. Such a practice would be wasteful of hospital resources and restricting to the mother, who needs freedom and mobility to ease into the care of her baby. A *sample* of the mother's condition, taken at set times of the day, is all that is needed to ensure that she is recovering smoothly from the birth.

So it is with keeping a record of a child's learning. All that is needed to check that progress is being made is a written record of *samples* of what the child is doing, taken at regular intervals. No special tests are needed — the parent or teacher can simply note what happens in normal teaching sessions or while observing the child at play.

There are two questions to be answered: How often should the sample be taken? How can progress be recorded so that it is easy to do, yet gives useful information? The answers to these questions will vary according to the skill being taught, the rate at which the child is making progress and the circumstances of the teacher or parent. Let's look first at the question of how often the sample should be taken.

The Once-a-Week Sample

This involves recording your child's progress just once a week. This system works well for ongoing programs such as eating, dressing and toileting. In such programs your objectives might remain much the same for quite some time.

A once-a-week system can also work well for checking progress in *language*. You might take a record of your child's language on Tuesdays, for example, and transfer your information to his checklists on Tuesday nights, reviewing his progress as you do so. (This process is explained in Book 3.)

If you are trying a new approach or are worried about your child's progress or have a particular question to explore, you can always introduce more frequent record-keeping on a short-term basis.

The Three-a-Week Sample

For most of your short-term objectives, particularly those you are working on in planned daily teaching sessions, we suggest taking a record three times a week. If you want to take more, so much the better, but the three-a-week system has worked well at Macquarie and should give you enough information to make changes at the right times and in the right way.

This does not mean, of course, that you should only *teach* three times a week. As you become familiar with the program and working towards your child's objectives becomes natural to you, you will probably want to do some planned teaching most days. The three-a-week system allows you some teaching sessions where you do not need to worry about keeping a record.

If you use the three-a-week system, plan to take your records on the same days each week, where possible, so that you can compare your information from one week to the next.

Sometimes you will need to make changes to your child's program *between* record-taking days — for instance when your child achieves one objective and needs to move on to a new one. (We discuss this later in this chapter.) Be flexible in your use of the system — the system should serve *you*, and not the other way around.

The Everyday Sample

While the three-a-week sample is sufficient in most circumstances, it is sometimes helpful to take a record more frequently. Here are some reasons for keeping an everyday record.

1. *You find it easier to take a record every day.* Perhaps you find it easier to do things in the same way every day. Or perhaps you are just starting to record your child's progress, and want to practise every day until you feel confident about it. Go right ahead!

2. *You are trying something new and want to keep the closest watch possible on how your new program is going.* This is a good reason for keeping a daily record. You might keep a daily record on one special task, and use the three-a-week system for your child's other objectives.

3. *You have been keeping a three-a-week record, but you doubt that it's giving you an accurate picture.* An everyday record will give you a more detailed picture of the progress your child is making.

4. *You are planning a special program to change an existing behaviour.* If your child has already learned a behaviour that you want to change (such as bed-wetting or throwing food or screaming at bedtime), it is a good idea to take a very detailed record, at least to start with. This is because it is harder to change a behaviour that already exists (that is, to help your child to 'unlearn' something) than it is to teach a new skill. In such circumstances it helps to start keeping your record a few days *before* you start teaching, so that you can see what difference your new approach is making. We will discuss this topic more fully in Chapter 6.

In the rest of this chapter we will refer mainly to the three-a-week system. But everything we have to say applies just as well to the everyday sample.

Box 4.1 What Symbols Would You Write?

Objective	*What the child does*
Puts a block on a block.	— Puts a block on a block.
Puts a block on a block.	— Puts a block on a block, when the bottom block is held steady.
Puts a block on a block when the bottom block is held steady.	— Puts a block on a block, when the bottom block is held steady, and his hand is guided.
Cuts across a 10 cm square of paper with scissors.	— Cuts across a 10 cm square of paper with scissors, when helped to hold the paper still.
Cuts across a 10 cm square of paper with scissors, when helped to hold the paper still.	— Cuts across a 10 cm square of paper with scissors, when helped to hold the paper still.
Follows the direction 'Give the keys to Daddy'.	— Gives the keys to an older sister.
Follows the direction 'Give the keys to Daddy'.	— Gives the keys to Daddy when given a verbal reminder 'Where's Daddy?'

HOW TO RECORD PROGRESS

Record-keeping, like assessment, is largely a matter of observation. You could keep a record by watching what your child does and writing it down like a story. Here is an example:

> Objective: Karen imitates a vertical line.
>
> I drew a line and gave the crayon to Karen and said: 'You draw a line like Mummy's.' Karen went 'dot, dot, dot' on the paper. I said: 'Look at Mummy. I go down . . . down . . . and stop. You do it.' Karen drew down and up, without lifting her crayon from the paper. I said: 'Good, you're trying' — and showed her again. She took the crayon and . . .

Clearly, this is just not practical. When you work with your child, 99% of your attention must be with her, and pencil and paper must be on the sidelines. Karen's lesson could easily have ended up like this:

> . . . went 'dot . . . dot'. The next thing I knew Karen was under the table with the crayon in her mouth, but I'm not sure how she got there because I was too busy writing down this blank blank record!

The answer is to describe your child's actions in a special kind of shorthand. This will work very well as long as you know what you are looking for.

In Chapter 2 we talked about ***setting objectives*** to describe exactly what your child will do when he has mastered the task. If you are happy at this stage for him to do the task with help, this should be written down as part of your objective, for example:

> Threads large beads, when helped to hold the string.
> Steps off a 10 cm block, one hand held.
> Follows simple directions around the house, with only one reminder.

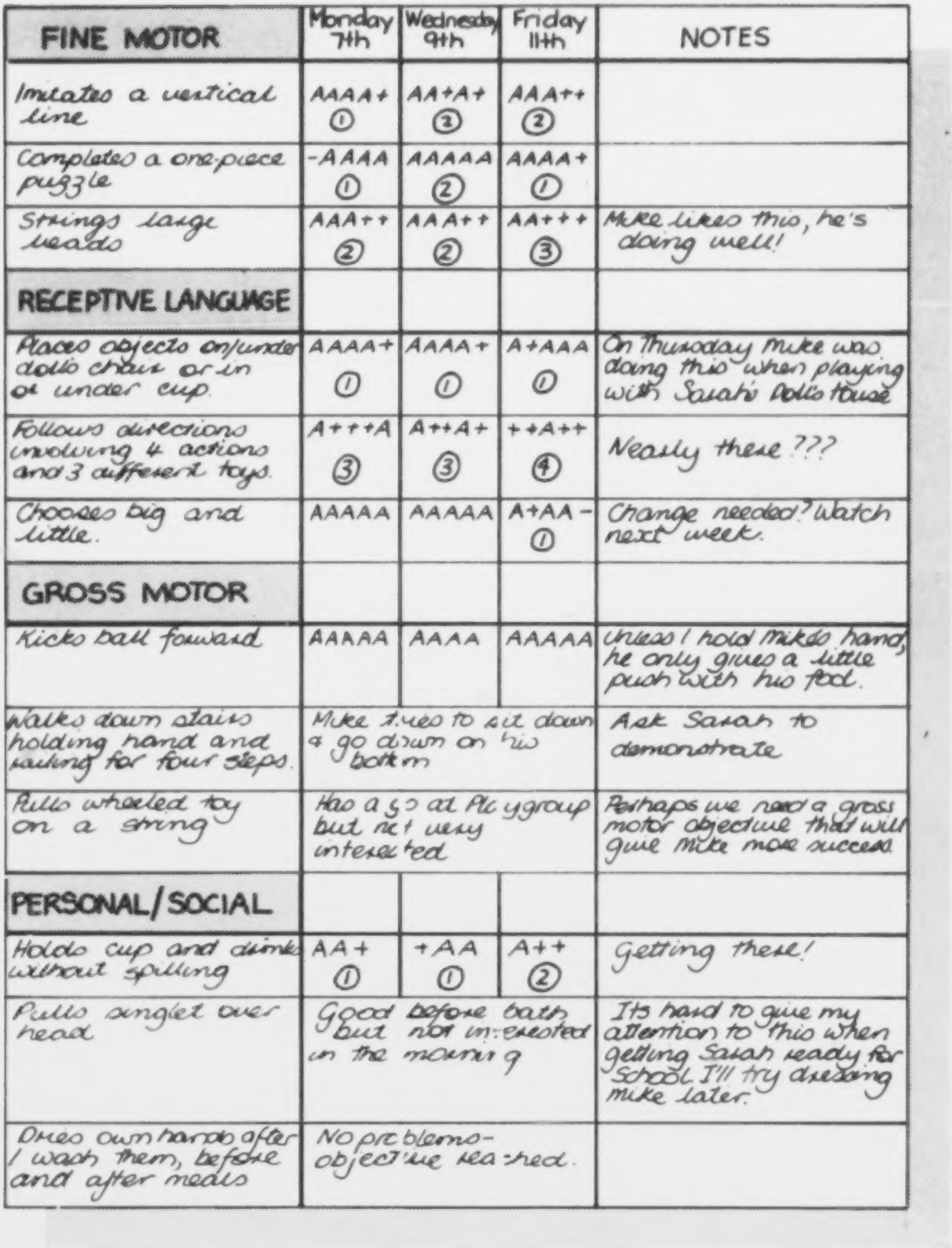
Once you have written down your objectives in this way, all you need to do to keep a record is to write down a symbol alongside the objective each time your child attempts that activity. It does not really matter what symbols you use, as long as you, and everyone else involved, know what they mean. Here is a suggestion:

+ This means that your child did the task exactly as it is described in the objective. (He did not get any help that is not described in the objective.)

A This means that your child did the task with assistance of some kind (in addition to any assistance that is described in the objective).

− This means that your child could not, or would not, do the task at all.

You might like to consider what symbols you would write in the circumstances described in Box 4.1.



FINE MOTOR	Monday 7th	Wednesday 9th	Friday 11th	NOTES
Imitates a vertical line	AAAA+ ①	AA+A+ ②	AAA++ ②	
Completes a one-piece puzzle	-AAAA ①	AAAAA ②	AAAA+ ①	
Strings large beads	AAA++ ②	AAA++ ②	AA+++ ③	Mike likes this, he's doing well!
RECEPTIVE LANGUAGE				
Places objects on/under dolls chair or in or under cup.	AAAA+ ①	AAAA+ ①	A+AAA ①	On Thursday Mike was doing this when playing with Sarah's Dolls House
Follows directions involving 4 actions and 3 different toys.	A+++A ③	A++A+ ③	++A++ ④	Nearly there ???
Chooses big and little.	AAAAA	AAAAA	A+AA- ①	Change needed? Watch next week.
GROSS MOTOR				
Kicks ball forward	AAAAA	AAAA	AAAAA	Unless I hold Mikes hand, he only gives a little push with his foot.
Walks down stairs holding hand and railing for four steps.	Mike tries to sit down & go down on his bottom			Ask Sarah to demonstrate
Pulls wheeled toy on a string	Has a go at Playgroup but not very interested			Perhaps we need a gross motor objective that will give Mike more success
PERSONAL/SOCIAL				
Holds cup and drinks without spilling	AA+ ①	+AA ①	A++ ②	Getting there!
Pulls singlet over head	Good before bath but not interested in the morning			Its hard to give my attention to this when getting Sarah ready for School. I'll try dressing Mike later.
Dries own hands after I wash them, before and after meals	No problems - objective reached.			

Mike's Record

Once you have set your objectives and have decided on a set of symbols to describe what your child does all you need is a way to *organise* your information into a simple graph or chart. There is room for creativity here. If you would like to invent your own system, keep these points in mind:

- It must be easy to use during your teaching sessions.
- It must be easy to read when you come to review your child's progress.
- It should take little time to maintain, after your initial setting-up.

We will present two systems here for you to consider. They are the column book and the instant graph.

The Column Book

Here is a simple but effective way to organise an exercise book for record-keeping. It gives you room to add informal notes, as well as keeping a detailed record of what your child is doing.

1. Choose an ordinary, ruled exercise book, of the kind that children use in school.

2. Open it to the first double page.

3. Rule a line to make a column about 7 cm wide on the left side of your double page. This is where you will write your child's objectives.

4. Rule a line to make a column of the same size on the right side of the double page. This is where you will write any notes or comments.

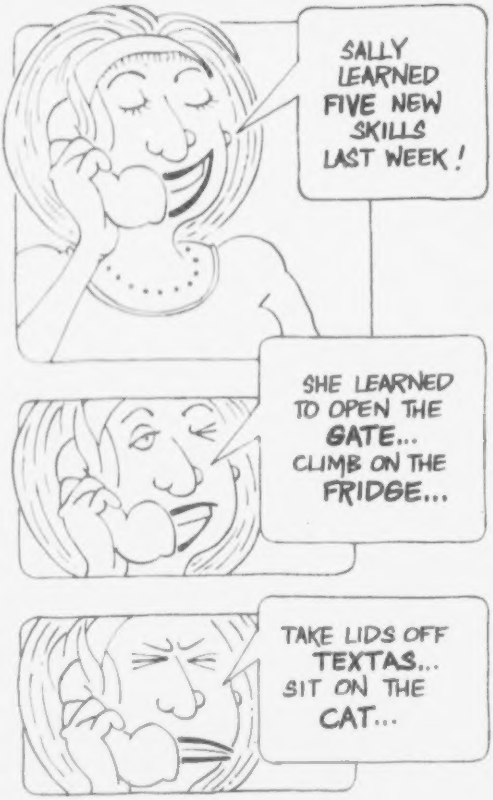
5. Divide the rest of the double page into columns — one for each record-keeping day. If you are using the three-a-week system, you will need three columns. If you are using the everyday system, you will need seven columns. Write the date at the top of each column.

6. Spread your objectives out down the page.

7. Write your symbols in the columns, opposite your objectives.

8. At the end of the week, you can turn the page and start again. If you are not making any changes to your objectives, there is no need to write them out again — simply fold back the Notes column on the right side of your page so that the objectives from last week can be seen on your new double spread.

9. Each time you review your child's progress, go back and count the number of plus symbols for each objective on each record-keeping day. Write this number under your symbols in a brightly coloured pen. It will then be easy to see the totals going up or down.


SALLY LEARNED FIVE NEW SKILLS LAST WEEK !
SHE LEARNED TO OPEN THE GATE... CLIMB ON THE FRIDGE...
TAKE LIDS OFF TEXTAS... SIT ON THE CAT...

On page 2–38 you will find an example of this system in use, a record of Mike's progress over a week. You will see that Mike's mother does not use symbols for all his objectives; sometimes she finds it easier to describe what he does.

The Instant Graph

We have used this system successfully at Macquarie for many years. After a little practice, it is very quick and easy to use. It does not allow as much space for notes and comments as the column book, but it takes much less time to prepare. Best of all, the instant graph gives you a *visual* impression of your child's progress — you can *see* whether his results are going up or down without reading anything.

You will find a copy of the instant graph on page 2–40. Use this one for practice. If you decide you like the system, you can photocopy the graph at the end of this chapter for use with your child.

INSTANT GRAPH

Objective:	**Date:**	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/
		5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
		4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
		3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
		2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
		1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Objective:	**Date:**	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/
		5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
		4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
		3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
		2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
		1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

This is how to use the instant graph.

1. There is space for two objectives on each page. Write your objectives in the blank spaces on the left, one objective to each space.

2. For each objective, there is a series of columns of numerals, like this:

5
4
3
2
1
0

Each column represents a record-keeping day. Write the date at the top of each column, like this (we have used *italics* to indicate hand-written entries):

16/5	*17/5*	*19/5*
5	5	5
4	4	4
3	3	3
2	2	2
1	1	1
0	0	0

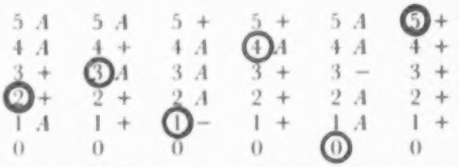
3. Each of the numerals 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 represents a try at the task. (Ignore the 0 for the moment.) This is ideal for the five-try system, but if you are giving fewer tries, just ignore the higher numerals.

4. After your child's first try, write your symbol (plus, A, minus, or whatever you have chosen) next to the numeral 1. After your child's second try, write your symbol next to the numeral 2. Continue like this for all your child's tries. Your record will look something like this:

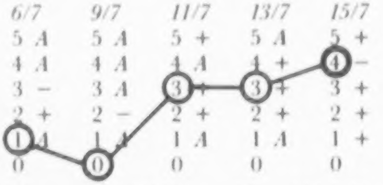
17/5
5 *A*
4 +
3 *A*
2 *A*
1 −
0

In this example the child could not do the task at all on his first try, did it with help on his second and third tries, did it as described in the objective on his fourth try, and did it with help on his fifth try.

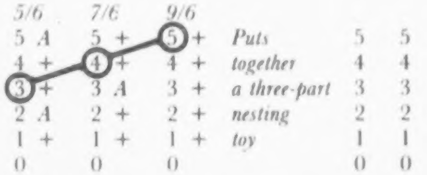
5. Now, count the number of plus symbols in your record. If your record shows one plus, circle numeral 1. If your record shows three pluses, circle numeral 3. If your record shows no pluses circle zero. In each case, you circle the numeral that corresponds to the total number of plus symbols in your record for that day. Here are some examples:



6. When you have kept a record for two or more days, you can join up your circles to make your graph, as shown in this example:



7. When your child has achieved his objective, simply rule it off. You can still use the rest of the row — either write your new objective over the top of the columns of numbers, or for a neat effect, stick a small self-adhesive label over the next few columns, and write your new objective on that.



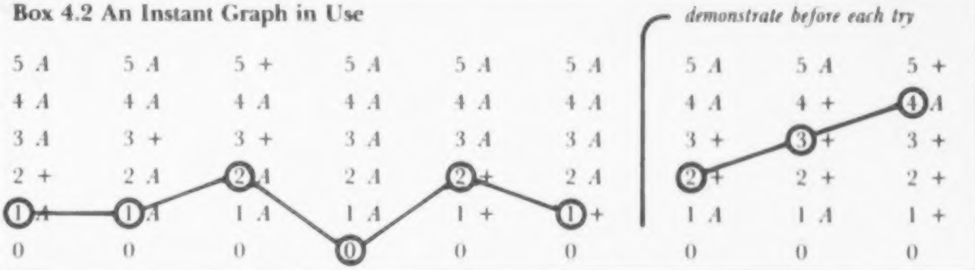
8. If you are continuing to work on the same objective, but plan to try a new teaching method, add a 'change line' like the one shown in Box 4.2. This will make it easy for you to see whether your new approach is helping your child to learn the skill. And that's all there is to it!

You might like to try this system with one objective first, to see whether it works for you. It may suit you to continue using the column book for some objectives and the instant graph for others.

In most of the examples we have shown you, five tries have been given on each task each day. We have found at Macquarie that for most children, and on most tasks, five tries give enough opportunity for learning, without tiring the child.

Some tasks, however, take a long time to do. Few children would be happy about building a tower of six blocks five times in a row or com-

Box 4.2 An Instant Graph in Use



pleting five jigsaw puzzles! There are three things you can do in such cases.

1. Spread your five tries out during the day, rather than sticking to one long teaching session.

2. Give fewer tries: three, for instance. Your record will be clearer, and your child will know what to expect, if you give the same number of tries each day.

3. Some tasks can be divided up into 'bits', and you can record how your child does each 'bit' on his first try at the task. With building a tower, for example, you might record how he goes with each block. Say he puts the second block on the first without help, needs physical help with the next two, a verbal prompt with the next and then get the last one on himself. Your record would look like this:

+ A A A +

This method can be clearly shown on the instant graph, by listing the 'bits' of the task at the left of the columns of numbers. In the following example, we have divided the task of drawing a face into the following 'bits': circle, eyes, nose and mouth. (The numeral 5 is not used in this record.)

	5		5		5		5	
	4	+	4	+	4	A	4	+
Draws face with eyes, mouth and nose	3	A	3	+	3	+	3	+
	2	A	2	A	2	A	2	A
	1	+	1	+	1	+	1	+
	0		0		0		0	

Use the system that suits you best. The most important things to remember are to be consistent and to make sure that everyone involved uses the same system!

USING YOUR RECORD TO MAKE CHANGES

We will assume here that you are using the three-a-week, five-tries system of record-keeping. But the principles apply, whatever system you are using.

In Chapter 3 we outline three basic steps in the teaching process:

1. What to do *before* your child acts
2. What to do *while* your child acts
3. What to do *after* your child acts.

Keep these three steps in mind when you feel a change is needed in your child's program. You might change what you do in all of the steps, but more often than not a change is only needed in one.

Changing what you do **before** usually involves *giving more information* to your child about what to do, and/or *giving a demonstration.*

Changing what you do **while** your child is attempting the task can mean *giving more information* as you go, and/or adding or changing *physical help.*

Changing what you do **after** your child acts involves changing the way you *reinforce* your child.

Sometimes it is necessary to *change the task* itself, to either an easier or a harder step. Or you can *change or adapt the materials*, to make the task easier or to add interest and variety.

At Macquarie the teachers look at the *pattern* of each child's record to see how many pluses there were each day and whether they are going up or down or are steady over a number of days. Different patterns suggest different kinds of changes. Our research has shown that the changes we make to children's programs are more likely to help the child to learn when we follow the guidelines described below than when we rely on instinct alone.

You will need to review your child's progress every two weeks if you are using the three-a-week sample, and weekly if you are keeping a daily record. Make a change *immediately* (even if it's not a record-keeping day) if your child reaches an objective or if serious problems are apparent after three days of trying. We will discuss the last two situations first and then go on to look at the scheduled review.

1. **Your child achieves an objective.** Your child has achieved his objective if:

- He succeeds in all five tries on any one day.
- He succeeds in four out of five tries for two days in a row.
- He uses the skill, as defined in your objective, not in the teaching session but in its natural context. (For example, he puts all his rings on his stick in play, or spontaneously builds a tower.)

Don't wait until the week or fortnight is up — change his objective *now*. If possible, set a new objective which builds on the skill he has just learned. Perhaps you could use materials which are slightly more challenging, or introduce a wider range of choices. As well, make sure that he has plenty of opportunities to practise his new skill in play or in round-the-house situations. (See Chapter 5: *Playing, Remembering, Extending*.) If you persist with a task after your child has shown that he can do it, he may well show signs of frustration. If you are in doubt about whether he has really *mastered* the task, try it with different materials and/or in different places.

2. **Your child will not try or cannot do the task with help for three days.** Don't wait until the week or fortnight is up; make a change now. Your answers to the following questions will help you decide what changes to make:

- Is the task too hard?
- Could I introduce an easier step?
- Could I change or adapt the materials to make it easier?
- Is the task too easy?
- Is my child refusing to try because the task holds no challenge or interest?
- Should I try a harder step?
- Am I reinforcing my child effectively?
- Does he know what I want him to do?
- Am I reinforcing something I don't want to encourage?

If you are not sure, the answer may lie in trial and error. Keep an everyday sample for a while, so that you can keep a careful check on your methods and your child's responses.

The Scheduled Review

When you are faced by neither success nor disaster, review your child's progress after approximately six record-keeping days. If you are using the three-a-week system, this will mean a fortnightly review. For each task, your child's records will fit into one of the following patterns:

Making progress, but not quite there yet

If the number of pluses has gradually increased, change nothing; you are doing well, and should confidently go on as you are.

Steady at one or two successful tries out of five

Your child is having some success, but in less than half his attempts. Things are getting neither better nor worse. Try *giving more information* on how the task should be done, or *adding some physical help*, or *adapting the materials* to make the task just a little easier.

Steady at the 'almost there' level

Your child has been achieving the objective in three or four out of five tries for several days, but seems to have got stuck at that level. Try *changing your reinforcement:* a little more encouragement, or excitement, on your part might motivate your child to try that little bit harder. Or you could try *giving a little more information* on how the task should be done, by demonstrating before he tries, or telling him what to do while he tries.

Making progress, in the wrong direction

You know from earlier experience that your child could do the task better than he is now. Try *changing your reinforcement*, to help him want to try. Or you could try *stepping ahead to a harder version of the same task*. This will help if your child is bored or frustrated with the task — perhaps he would benefit from a challenge.

Up and down and all over the place

If your child's record varies a lot from day to day, consider the following points. Babies and toddlers often vary considerably in what they can do from day to day. Parents who bring their little ones to an early intervention program once a week often express frustration when their child won't do 'on the day' something he has been doing splendidly all week! If your child's record always seems variable, you will benefit from keeping an everyday sample. This will help you get a sense of your child's *average* performance, and you will be able to see *trends* in progress, even if you can't see straight lines.

But variable records can also indicate that your child is 'playing up'. On some days he wants to co-operate and he achieves well, and on other days he is not interested and he achieves little. If this is your problem, try the following:

- Step ahead to a harder version of the same task to give your child new challenge and interest.
- Change the materials. Something new might motivate him to try.
- Change your reinforcement.

Trial and Error

As we have said before, teaching involves *trial and error*. All teachers make mistakes and there is no shame in this. Mistakes, as long as they are recognised, can help us learn more about how to teach effectively and will make us better teachers in the long run. Record-keeping makes it impossible for us to persist with our mistakes for long, and better still, it helps us to recognise our successes. And *we* need to feel that we are making progress, just as much as our children do.

INSTANT GRAPH

Objective:	**Date:**	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/
		5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
		4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
		3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
		2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
		1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Objective:	**Date:**	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/
		5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
		4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
		3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
		2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
		1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

CHAPTER 5

Playing, Remembering, Extending

Children attending the Macquarie Program spend a large part of every session in play. Visitors to the Program sometimes ask why so much time is devoted to play. Wouldn't the time be better spent in more formal learning activities? Or is it perhaps a way to free the staff for more important things?

Certainly no parent or teacher would deny the sense of release that comes when children are happily engaged in play. It is wonderful, in the middle of a busy morning, to feel free to do something else or to sit and watch or to join in and share the game that the children have chosen. But what makes it most wonderful of all is the knowledge that playtime is good for the children too. Play is important in its own right — just as important as all the other activities we plan for them.

Children play for fun and they also play to learn. The younger the child, the more inseparable the two become. It is unlikely that young children have any concept of play as a separate part of life. Play is the business of the child.

Many, if not most, of the skills you will teach your child in this program can be described as play skills. The skills you teach your child will show her more ways to play and her playing will help her to learn more skills. This is a circular process, in which one aspect helps the other.

If you see your child's play purely in terms of learning, you may miss out on some of the pleasure — the sheer fun — that playing with your child can bring. If you are always pushing her to try something new, she will miss out on valuable practice time — and the chance to relax. All of us need opportunities to relish familiar objects and activities, free of any pressure. Yet, as long as these needs are respected, there are marvellous opportunities for parents, and particularly parents of disabled children, to teach through play.

Play is a huge subject — many books have been written on play alone. Some are suggested in Book 1 in the general resource list. They make enjoyable and informative reading. In this chapter we introduce some of the most important facts and issues about play and give you some ideas about making the most (but not too much!) of playtime.

Here are some benefits of play — for your child and for you:

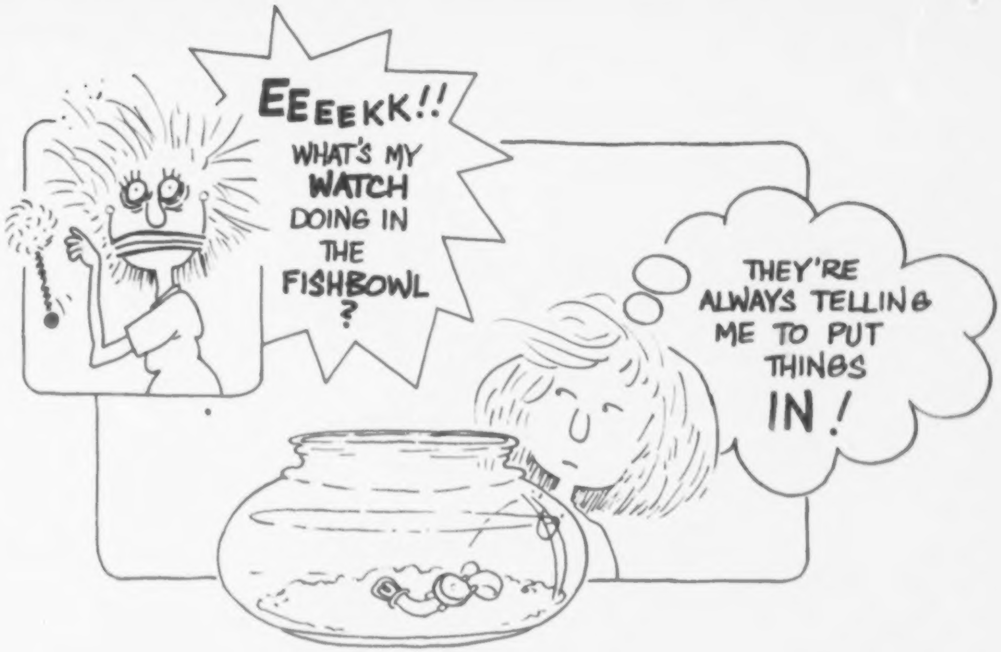
- Play lets your child practise the skills she has already learned.
- Play helps your child remember the things she has learned.
- Play teaches your child new ways to use her skills — with different materials or in different situations.
- Play provides a basis for interaction with other children; there are so many opportunities for sharing, listening and talking at playtime.
- Play gives you an opportunity to observe your child — to see if she is using the skills you have taught her and to watch out for areas where extra help is needed.
- Play gives opportunities for learning new skills — and a happy setting for teaching.
- Play gives your child opportunities to explore and discover the world around her.

To make the most of these benefits, you will need to know a little about the development of play skills in young children.

HOW PLAY DEVELOPS

A child's first plaything is herself. In early infancy she explores the world through her senses of sight, hearing and touch, and she explores with her mouth the source of her food. Soon she begins to feel her own body with her hands. She investigates her hands with her mouth. She watches her hands as they move in front of her face.

The baby looks about her from the very beginning. She has a preference for looking at faces.


EEEEKK!! WHAT'S MY WATCH DOING IN THE FISHBOWL ?
THEY'RE ALWAYS TELLING ME TO PUT THINGS IN !

Yours is her favourite but even a simply drawn face, placed in her bassinet or suspended above her, will hold her attention. Soon she will look at other objects placed near her, or gaze at the pattern of the sunlight on the wall or the bright square of a cushion.

But is this play? Certainly it is part of the continuum that we describe, in its later forms, as play. It fulfils the same purposes of exploration and discovery.

The child begins to explore what she can do to other things with her own body. She discovers that she can reach out and hit suspended objects, making them dance. When she learns to grasp and hold, she finds that she can make objects rattle and jingle and squeak. Pulling Daddy's beard or Mummy's hair produces the most delightful squeaks of all!

As soon as she can, she will bring objects to her mouth — not so much to taste them as to *feel* them better. Her sensitive mouth can give her so much more information than her fingers, which she can only partly control.

She is learning that her new activities have another wonderful effect; they bring smiles and congratulations from her all-important companions. This encourages her to experiment further and she discovers new movements and sensations. She is learning and her parents are teaching.

Learning to hold two objects at the same time is a major step forward. Now she can bring things together; perhaps they will go 'clunk' or 'bang'. She discovers the effect that one object has on another. By now she is aware of the participation of others in her games and may take up someone else's idea and add it to her own activity. She begins to develop a sense that objects and people exist independently of her own senses. When Mummy goes, she can be summoned back with a cry or a shout. When the spoon falls off the highchair, she can lean over and see it on the floor. When Teddy disappears under the blankets, she can feel for him and pull him out for a cuddle. Peek-a-boo and hide-and-seek games amaze and delight her.

As the child becomes more skilful in her use of objects, the scope for play and interaction increases. Taking and putting, opening and shutting provide much amusement and she can adapt these skills to all kinds of materials. Mummy and Daddy can take and put with her; she discovers the joys of taking turns. She will lift the telephone receiver and pass it to Daddy again and again, delighted by his repeated 'hello', his broad smile and her own control over object and person.

Now she is learning to use objects for their intended purposes. Anything resembling a cup will be lifted to her lips — great fun in the bath! She pushes a toy car and tries to push the straw back into the juice carton. Soon she will try to brush her own hair or Dolly's or (best of all) yours. Gradually she imitates more and more of the things she sees happening around her, including things you have no intention of teaching her, such as pulling the plug out of the power point. Perhaps she will want to sweep when you sweep, or dab at a dish with a tea-towel at washing-up time. There is no distinction in her world between work and play.

Imaginative play has its roots in this imitation of adult activities, as she sees them. Direct imitation leads to improvising, such as using a block as a hairbrush, or putting Bunny to sleep in the baking dish. Gradually her play develops into the complex pretending games of the later preschool years.

Her direct physical involvement with objects helps her to see the similarities and differences between them. Many preschoolers enjoy sorting or categorising objects. She may sort all the plastic pegs from the wooden ones, or extract all her books from her toy shelf and make a pile of them, or line up her nesting cups in order of size.

Although she will welcome the participation of adults and older children in her play from infancy, co-operative play with children her own age is much slower to develop. As a baby she will play in a solitary way among other children — watching them, certainly, and perhaps wanting what *they* have, but essentially in a world of her own. As a toddler, she enters the stage called 'parallel play'. Now she will play alongside other children, sharing materials (with guidance), and sometimes copying their activities or offering them materials from her own store.

Little by little she learns that her own experiences can be extended by playing co-operatively with her age-mates, working (playing!) with them towards a common goal and taking or giving directions, according to the pecking order of the group. Preplanned imaginative games, where rules are set and roles agreed on ('You be the Mummy and I'll be the Shop-Man'), are the last to emerge and many children only become fully confident with this kind of play after they reach school age.

As the child progresses from solitary play through parallel play and on to the co-operative play, her play skills and social skills are developing hand in hand.

Roy McConkey at St. Michall's House in Dublin has studied the development of pretend-play in young children. He suggests that there are five stages which all children go through in their play leading to pretend-play.* The child does not suddenly jump from one stage to the other but seems to add new actions to her existing games.

Stage 1. Exploratory Play: The child explores different objects using much the same actions with each. The major actions include mouthing, shaking, hitting, examining, dropping, throwing, feeling. All these actions help a child to discover the material properties of each object.

Stage 2. Relational Play: The child attempts to relate two objects, by placing one object in or on another — a spoon in a cup, a block on another block or in a posting box or container.

Stage 3. Self Pretending: The child seems to be aware of the function of the object and she pretends to use it on herself. For example, she pretends to drink from a cup.

Stage 4. Simple Pretending: The child now applies the pretend action to another object. For example, she will pretend to feed Teddy or put him in the truck to drive it.

Stage 5. Sequence Pretending: The child forms up the previous simple action into a series or sequence of actions. She may give Teddy his dinner and then make him drive the truck into the garage. The objects she uses may become more 'pretend' also. The truck may be a shoe box and the garage may be the space under the armchairs!

MAKING THE MOST OF YOUR CHILD'S PLAYTIME

The disabled child shares with all children the need to explore the world around her, securely and with enjoyment. As parents, you will want to fulfil this need, regardless of disability. While the normal child gives her parents plenty of guidance as to her play needs, you may find it a little harder to know how to proceed with your disabled child. Most disabled children (indeed, most children) develop faster in some areas than

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* McConkey, R. and Jeffree, D.M. 'First Steps in Learning to Pretend: Developing Children's Play', *Special Education: Forward Trends*, Vol. 7 (2), 1980, pp. 21–23.

LOOK WHAT I'VE GOT FOR YOU TODAY!
NOT BEADZ AGAIN!

in others. It can be hard to plan activities for the child whose conceptual ability exceeds her physical ability or for the child who is very active but hasn't yet learned the correct uses for the objects she can reach and claim. Moreover, the relationship between play and learning makes this an area of special concern for parents whose children learn slowly. You will need to be more deliberate in your approach to your disabled child's play than you were with any other children in your family.

But you *can* organise things in a way that leaves you free to relax and enjoy your child's play as it happens. What is needed is a little planning from time to time, care in selecting materials, awareness of the importance of what your child is doing now and knowledge of what to expect and encourage next.

In Books 4, 5, 6 and 7 you will find specific suggestions for practising your child's new skills in play. This practice is an essential part of helping your child to *remember* what she has learned and to *extend* her skills to new materials and situations. Below you will find some general points about making the most of your child's playtime.

How Your Child Plays Now

Recognise the stage of play that your child is demonstrating now, and provide materials suited to that stage.

Before they learn to crawl, all children must rely on their parents to bring toys to them. Many disabled children need toys brought to them for longer than the average child, and their play skills may develop more quickly than their ability to seek out materials for themselves. Problems with taking the initiative are compounded when language development is delayed and the child cannot ask for the things she wants. You will need to be especially alert to the kinds of materials your child likes and those that will offer her both practice and challenge.

A different kind of problem is presented by the child who has learned to walk and climb, but who does not yet have the skills to put the enticing things she finds to good use. You may avoid some confrontations by restructuring your living areas but this is a short-term measure. Teaching her the skills she needs for constructive play will of course be a high priority. While you are teaching these skills, you might try giving your child her own safe versions of the things she now likes. If, for instance, she likes to tear books, could she have an out-of-date telephone directory all of her own to tear, with the stipulation that all other books are for looking only?

Older children whose development is delayed frequently prefer toys that relate to their own age to those that might seem to suit their stage of development. Adaptation is the answer. Your child might hate her babyish rings-on-a-stick set but might enjoy putting rope or rubber coits over a stake in the garden.

Again, give your child plenty of time to do the things she *can* do, with materials that are easy for

her to handle, without pushing her ahead. There should be time for a rest at the top of each step.

Extending Present Skills

Recognise the stage of play that will come next, and show your child how she could extend what she is doing.

The principle here is very like that for teaching communication skills. Watch what your child does, do the same thing yourself and from time to time show her a way that she could add something more to her activity. If she bangs a block on the table, you bang too, and then take another block and show her that blocks can be banged together.

Unless your assessment shows you that block-banging is the next step in the sequence for your child to learn, there is no need to impose your idea of what blocks are for over hers. Just help her to see the possibilities. And if block-banging *is* your current objective, try and preserve the sense of play as you teach. Indeed, the challenge is not to make play more like work, but to make teaching and learning more like play!

Your Child's Play Materials

Vary your child's play materials.

One obvious reason for doing this is to avoid boredom. It helps to rotate your child's toys between the playroom and the toy cupboard. That over-familiar, neglected toy will have a new sparkle after it has been out of sight for a couple of weeks. Toy libraries are an invaluable source of exciting and different toys, should you be lucky enough to have one near by.

But there is another equally important reason for varying play materials. Your child needs to learn that her new skills can be applied in different ways to different things. We can help a child to learn new concepts more quickly, in many cases, if we select our materials carefully and introduce them in a quiet corner in a structured way. But once she has begun to get the idea, she needs to *extend* it to other materials and situations. This extension process should begin in the structured teaching sessions and should be followed up in a play setting. You will find many suggestions for varying materials in Books 4, 5, 6 and 7 so here are just two.

If your child has just learned to put, provide a variety of containers, of different shapes, sizes and materials. Provide a variety of objects for putting, too. Try putting into plastic dishes floating in the bath and into holes dug in the sandpit.

If your child is learning the functions of everyday objects, try filling her toy box with all sorts of brushes, cups, dusters and so on. Clear away other toys and set up a Dolly corner instead, improvising with boxes for furniture, and filling it with the practical objects about which she is learning. When this wears thin, try setting up a cubby in the garden.

Thinking about ways to extend your child's new skills gives you a basis for constructive, rather than random, toy changes.

Practice Opportunities

Provide practice opportunities in different places, and with different people.

> Joey draws beautiful pictures for me at home — he draws lines, circles and faces with hair and ears and everything! But at preschool, all he does is scribble. They say he will only attempt to draw a face if they stay with him and prompt him all the time.
>
> I arrived at playgroup bursting with the news that Prue was clapping hands at last. At music-time I was excited that maybe she'd be able to participate at last, but I was scared too — maybe she'd just sit there. And she did — sit there, I mean. She'd been clapping hands with me all week, but at playgroup she just sat and looked.

Joey and Prue both needed some special help to teach them how to use their skills outside their home environments. Joey's mother helped him by cutting down on her own prompting, and encouraging him to be independent by leaving him alone until his drawing was finished and ready to be admired. His preschool teachers helped him by gradually reducing their suggestions and instructions, and making a special fuss of any controlled lines and shapes he drew on his own.

Prue's mother had to continue helping her clap hands at playgroup for a little while. She didn't help her all the time, so that Prue had opportunities to try it by herself. The playgroup leader helped her, not so much by singling her out for special attention, which made Prue feel shy, but by giving her instruments which could be clapped together, and including her in her instructions and praise to the whole group. Prue was soon joining in, all by herself.

Extending the use of a new skill to new places, and with new people, is often difficult for the child, especially when she is spending a great deal of her time with one parent and relies on that parent to direct her activity. This applies to all children, not just disabled children. It will be of great benefit to your child if you can involve other people (family, friends and preschool staff) in your child's play. In the long run it is in the wide world beyond her home that her skills must be used. Such involvement will also take some of the pressure off *you*.

If opportunities for social contact and exploring new places are limited, because your community is small or isolated, try inviting other teachers into your home via the television or radio and become a learner alongside your child, letting her follow someone else's lead. In your situation it is most important that TV is not a babyminder, but a source of learning, with you near by to help her make the most of it. Where community resources are available, look for a playgroup where your child will have opportunities to relate to other children and adults, rather than one where parents stick exclusively to their own children or where the children fend for themselves all morning while parents chat over tea or coffee.

Observing Play

Spend time watching your child at play.

It's tempting to go and start the washing-up, now that your child is happily occupied without your attention, but you *need* that cup of coffee and the armchair on the far side of the room will provide the ideal place to sit and watch your

child at play. You can pick up so many things when you're not directly involved in your child's activity, as the parents who watch the preschool sessions through the glass observation window at Macquarie will tell you!

As you watch, ask yourself questions about what you see:

- Is your child using the skills you have been teaching her?
- Is she adapting them to new materials?
- Is she showing a preference for a particular activity that you could include in your teaching sessions?
- Is she having difficulty with a particular action?
- Does this suggest a new area for teaching?
- Is she still using the skills you taught her three months ago?
- What *was* she doing three months ago? Can you define the progress she has made?
- Have you reminded yourself lately what a great job you're doing?

When you watch your child at play, you are seeing the results of all your planning and hard work in a way that no assessment form can match. At the same time, you are assessing, through observation, to see where to go next.

It is time well spent, for both of you.

CHAPTER 6

Behaviour Problems and How to Avoid Them

First and foremost, a 'behavior problem' is *not* a label for a particular kind of child. Certainly, we have heard teachers say things like 'Oh, that little Jimmy, he's a *behaviour problem*' or 'I've got three *behaviour problems* in my class this year'. But this makes no more sense than to say 'Matthew is a weight problem' or 'All my children are allergy problems'. The problem does not define the child.

Well, then, what *is* a behaviour problem? It is *something that a child does* which creates a problem for her or for others. It creates a problem by interfering with learning or by stopping other people from doing what they need or want to do or by isolating the child from those around her. It may do all these things and more.

However severe the problem, it is the result of what the child *does*, not what she *is*.

ON PURPOSE OR BY ACCIDENT

The term 'behaviour problem' should be used only to describe something that the child is capable of learning *not* to do.

Of course, things that children do when they *can't* do any better can cause problems for parents. But this isn't the sort of problem we're concerned with here. The baby who drops and breaks a valuable ornament does not have a behaviour problem — she doesn't know any better. It would be equally ridiculous to say that the deaf child who doesn't come when she's called has a behaviour problem.

Even deliberate acts of naughtiness do not really count as problem behaviours the first time — or even the second time — they happen.

A behaviour becomes a problem behaviour when a child continues to repeat an unwanted action, even though she has been shown that it's unacceptable, and is capable of stopping it.

THE EYE OF THE BEHOLDER?

Society imposes certain norms on all of us but there is room for variations in behaviour from family to family. What is acceptable in one household may be quite unacceptable in another. Up to a certain point, there is room for disagreement about what constitutes a problem behaviour. Would all the parents you know agree about who is right and who is wrong in the following examples?

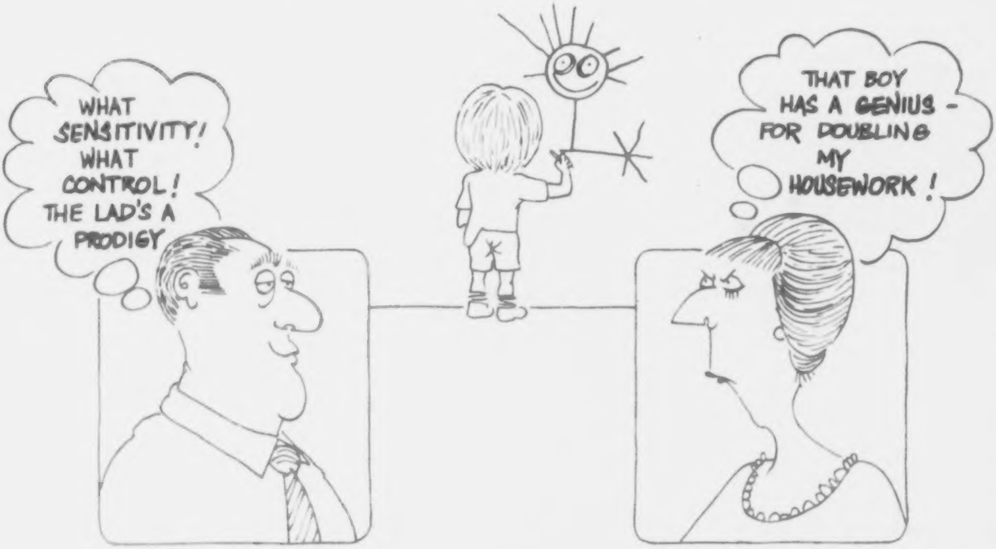
- Eeeek, Judy's drawn all over the fridge with a Texta pen.
- Oh, how lovely, Joey's decorated the fridge for us.
- I'm so pleased with Kerry — she eats everything we put in front of her. Mind you, she knows she won't get her dessert until her vegies are all gone.
- I'm so pleased with Kim. She has such well-developed tastes. She lets us know right away whether she likes something or not.

- We have a firm rule that Jerry goes to bed at 7.30. We have a lovely story-time and a cuddle, and then that's it till the morning. He used to cry when we first made this rule, but he's happy to accept it now.
- Jenny's a night owl, like me. Sometimes she's up till all hours, but it doesn't bother me. She knows when she's tired.

- Cheryl was so naughty in the bath tonight. She splashed water all over the bathroom and all over me.
- Charlie had such fun in the bath tonight — we all ended up sodden. It was better than a circus!

- I dread the time when Tod can open the front gate. He'll have to learn never to go out on the street without me.
- I can't wait until Tina's old enough to play on the footpath with the other kids — I want to teach her to be sensible on her own.

Especially in the early years before your child goes to school, it is your right (and responsibility) alone to say whether or not your child's behaviour


WHAT SENSITIVITY! WHAT CONTROL! THE LAD'S A PRODIGY
THAT BOY HAS A GENIUS - FOR DOUBLING MY HOUSEWORK!

constitutes a problem. Certainly you should keep its effect on other people in mind, but your child does not have a behaviour problem because your neighbour or mother-in-law says so. From a practical point of view you will find it hard to succeed in teaching your child to behave 'well' unless you have a firm idea in your own mind of what you want and expect her to do.

If you are not sure whether you should regard something your child does as a problem, the following questions might help you:

- Will this behaviour endanger my child, or others, either now or in the future?
- Does it fall within the standards I set (or would set) for other children in the family?
- If she persists with this behaviour, will it create problems for her in the future?
- Is it stopping her from doing (or learning to do) something more constructive?

BEHAVIOUR PROBLEM OR NAUGHTINESS?

Are behaviour problems and naughtiness the same thing? No. A child can be naughty without having a behaviour problem. Some naughtiness is normal and natural in small children, particularly as they discover that their ideas are not always the same as their parents' and explore the possibilities of going their own way. Small instances of naughtiness can be repeated and extended until they really do become a behaviour problem, but with sensitive handling this can usually be avoided.

Can a child have a behaviour problem without being naughty? Yes. A child might show none of the conventional naughty behaviour that we expect from young children, but still do something which interferes with her capacity to learn or to interact with others.

Some children develop the tactics of 'passive resistance' to avoid situations they dislike. Deliberate non-responsiveness can be a behaviour problem. So can self-stimulating behaviours such as persistent rocking, obsessive hand movements or head-banging.

A child with Down's Syndrome with a protruding tongue is certainly not being naughty — she is doing what feels right to her. Yet the protruding tongue may cause problems for her. It may affect the way others respond to her. It may be associated with difficulties in pronouncing words. It may encourage the child to breathe exclusively through the mouth and this can contribute to poor health. A protruding tongue can be seen as a physiological problem and a surgical solution is an option. But it can also be helpful to see tongue protrusion as a behaviour which can be changed. Many children with Down's Syndrome can *learn* to keep their tongues inside their mouths, using the techniques described in this chapter.

BEHAVIOUR PROBLEM OR EMOTIONAL PROBLEM?

Sometimes a confusion arises about whether a child is showing a behaviour problem or an emotional problem or personality trait. When a child persists (beyond the toddler stage) in clinging to her mother's legs in public, she is described as shy or insecure. The preschool child who screams every time her mother leaves the room might be described as overly dependent or excessively demanding. There are two problems with this approach. First, terms such as those used above tend to define or characterise the child in a way that may not do justice to other aspects of her behaviour. They are based on assumptions about cause and motivation that few of us are qualified to make. Second, the approach often provides an excuse for doing nothing about the behaviour. It is so easy to say 'That's just the way she is' and leave it at that. This is not to say that we should never consider a child's personality or emotional state. It would be impossible for parents *not* to consider these things, concerned as they are with their child's happiness and well-being. We are suggesting an *additional* step: Describe the problem in terms of what the child actually does. Once you have done this, you will be on the way towards helping her. You will have a clear idea of what it is that is holding your child back and hence what you would like to change.

Here are some examples of contrasting ways to describe a child's behaviour:

- Johnny is greedy.
- Johnny takes food from other people's plates.

- Laura is antisocial.
- Laura turns away when people speak to her.

- Morris is aggressive.
- Morris pinches his baby brother.

- Leah is defiant.
- Leah says 'No' to most instructions.

- George is lazy.
- George asks someone to help him with every task.

The first example in each pair uses very *emotive* words to describe the children. They may or may not be correct; the point is that they make assumptions about the inner workings of the child and they don't tell us what actually happens. The second example in each pair tells us exactly what it is that the child does, and hence what needs to change. Further, they isolate things that *can* change, in the very near future. If Johnny really is greedy, it may take a long time to change that inner impulse to claim everything for himself. But he can quickly learn not to take food from other people's plates, making mealtimes happier occasions for everyone — Johnny included!

PLANNING FOR CHANGE

There are two steps in planning for behaviour change:

1. Define the problem.
2. Set your objective.
3. Teach the child how to meet that objective.

Defining the Problem

First, describe the problem in terms of what the child actually does — as we have described above. Next, look to see what is happening before and after your child behaves in this way. Writing down a rough description of the events may help you to work this out. Your observation may give you more information about when, where and with whom the child is behaving in this way, and it may also give you valuable insight into what is *reinforcing* this behaviour. Of course, nobody is deliberately encouraging the behaviour, but you can be sure that your child is getting some sort of satisfaction from it!

Susan was concerned about her son Geoffrey's tendency to throw objects across the room. Geoffrey is physically active but is not yet talking. Box 6.1 illustrates the observations Susan made while Geoffrey was playing with his elder brother, Rob.

Susan could see from her record that Geoffrey was tending to throw things when Rob was paying no attention to him. This was not always a factor but it was there in most instances. Although Rob was not deliberately encouraging his brother, maybe Geoffrey found the shouting more satisfying than no contact at all and he kept throwing until he provoked a response.

Susan observed Geoffrey's throwing behaviour in other situations and confirmed her idea that he threw when he wanted someone's attention. She defined the problem like this: 'Geoffrey throws things, usually when nobody is paying attention to him.'

Spending time observing your child and defining exactly what he or she is doing, and when, and where, can help you immensely when you come to the next step — setting your objectives.

Box 6.1 Susan's Observations of Geoffrey

Before	*What happened*	*After*
G playing with R's car. R asks for car.	G throws car.	R angry — shouts 'Cut it out'. Goes and gets car, brings it back to the road.
R plays with back to G. G has block.	G throws block.	R ignores G.
G takes a block from R's road.	G throws block.	R shouts 'Go and get it'. G brings it back, all smiles.
R and G play together quite happily.		
R building tower.	G knocks tower down.	R angry but ignores G. Puts himself between G and the tower.
R keeps on building, with back to G.	G picks up Teddy, throws him over R's head at the tower.	R says 'Thanks a lot'. R asks me to stop G from spoiling his game.

Setting Your Objective

Your objectives will tell you what you are aiming towards. They are essential if you are to respond consistently to your child's behaviour. They will help you assess what progress is being made and they will help to ensure that everybody concerned is working towards the same end.

The most obvious way to state an objective for your child's behaviour is to insert the words 'does not' into your description of what she does, like this:

Johnny takes food from other people's plates.
Objective: Johnny does not take food from other people's plates.

Laura turns away when people speak to her.
Objective: Laura does not turn away when people speak to her.

When Susan was setting her objectives for Geoffrey, she tried this first. Her objective read: *Geoffrey does not throw things*. Certainly that was what she hoped for, but it sounded very negative when put this way. And Susan knew that unlearning something can be much harder than learning something new. She thought about things that Geoffrey could learn to do *instead* of throwing — things that would be incompatible with throwing or that would make it unnecessary.

In this way she came up with two positive objectives. The first one was *Geoffrey plays appropriately with his toys*. While he was playing with them, he couldn't throw them. Susan decided to reorganise her teaching program to give more emphasis to the skills that Geoffrey needed to play appropriately with the blocks and cars that the boys favoured, and to spend time encouraging and reinforcing his constructive play.

Keeping in mind *when* Geoffrey tended to throw, Susan set a second objective: *Geoffrey uses sounds to gain attention*. If Geoffrey learned a different way to gain attention, he would not need to throw. Even though he wasn't talking yet, he did make plenty of sounds. If people took notice of him when he made these sounds he would learn to use them deliberately. Susan was concerned about the demands that a new approach to Geoffrey's throwing would place on her older son, Rob, but she felt that Rob *could* learn to reply when Geoffrey talked to him. This objective was not only positive but *realistic*.

The principles for setting objectives for behaviour are these:

1. **Set a positive objective** that will help your child to learn an *alternative* to the unwanted behaviour and will let you concentrate on 'teaching *how* to' rather than 'teaching not to'.
2. **Set a realistic objective.**

A realistic objective must of course take account of what your child is capable of learning. If you are in doubt, see if you can break your overall objective down into small steps. A realistic objective must also take account of the attitudes and abilities of other people concerned. Because Rob

NO! BLAH, BLAH...
NO! BLAH, BLAH, BLAH!
NO, NO, NO! BLAH, BLAH...
DON'T WORRY, YOU'LL GET USED TO IT. IT'S JUST SOME SORT OF SPEECH IMPEDIMENT!

was involved in Geoffrey's problem, Susan looked for an objective that would make sense to Rob.

A *consistent approach* is important in the area of behaviour problems, above all other areas. It is essential that your objectives are understood and agreed to by all concerned. A round-table conference is a good way to ensure that everybody is aiming for the same thing.

TEACHING YOUR CHILD TO MEET YOUR OBJECTIVES

Here are some guidelines for teaching your child the behaviour that you expect of her.

1. **Know your objectives.**

2. **Make sure everybody concerned knows your objectives.**

3. **Decide on a consequence for the unwanted behaviour.** This must be something that discourages your child from wanting to behave that way again. Choose the *mildest* response that will work; you don't want to be unnecessarily 'heavy' with your child and it's good to leave something in reserve. Some alternatives, ranging from mildest to strongest are given in Box 6.2.

4. **Present the consequence immediately.** Young children, and older disabled children, have short memories. A delayed consequence can be meaningless and confusing. The incident must be fresh in the child's mind. If a brother or sister comes in from the garden and says 'Mummy, Katie just did so-and-so', it is possibly too late to do anything constructive about it.

5. **Be consistent.** Present the consequence every time you observe the behaviour and present it in exactly the same way, if you can. There will of course be times when you just can't do this — you can't arrange time-out on a bus, for instance. But if you are being scrupulously consistent whenever you can be, these unavoidable exceptions won't matter.

6. **Expect the behaviour to get worse before it gets better.** When your child senses that you are responding differently to her behaviour, she will want to test this new system. She will experiment to see just how much she can get away with or what it will take to break your resolve. A contest of wills develops, with the parent thinking 'I will, I WILL ignore her', and the child thinking 'Let's see if Daddy can ignore THIS'. This is why it is essential that you persist with any new approach for at least two weeks. When you have persuaded your child that you really mean business, positive results will start to appear. Continually chopping and changing your approach can make the problem worse. The child learns that she can always find some way to break down Mummy's and Daddy's resolve.

And on the positive side . . .

7. **Reinforce your child's constructive behaviour.** This is just as important as presenting consequences for the behaviour you don't want, but it can be harder to remember to do. It is so easy to become entirely absorbed by the problem behaviour; when your child is being 'good' it can give you the chance for a much needed break. Take your breaks near by, where you can *watch* and *praise* positive things that happen. Your child needs to know that it is not *her*, but certain things she does that you don't like, and to be sure of this she needs plenty of approval when she is behaving constructively.

8. **Teach your child positive skills to replace her problem behaviours.** We have already looked at the importance of planning objectives to replace unwanted behaviours with positive alternatives. At the same time as you introduce consistent consequences for the behaviour you don't want, begin active teaching of these positive objectives. Use the techniques described in Chapter 3, *How to Teach*. As far as possible, teach during the times

Box 6.2 Consequences for Unwanted Behaviour

Ignoring

This can be very effective for attention-seeking behaviours. Even if you have to deal with the results of what your child has done, or physically move her, you can do so without looking at her or showing the slightest flicker of interest or emotion. It can require a little acting ability!

Ignoring is sometimes impossible. If the problem behaviour is pinching the baby, you can hardly expect the baby to ignore it and thus the child is guaranteed a dramatic response.

Withdrawing privileges

This is usually more effective with older children. When used with younger children it must be immediate (such as prompt removal from the dinner table) and clearly understood.

Time-out

The child is taken away from what she is doing and is left alone for a short period — say, five minutes, or until everyone has calmed down. This should be done with as little fuss as possible. The child should be told why she is being timed-out, but no more need be said.

Using a special chair or corner sometimes works, but the child may get up to antics that are very hard for others in the room (especially other children) to ignore. It is usually more effective to take the child to another room — her bedroom, for instance.

You are not aiming to frighten the child, so don't shut her in if this really alarms her. But insist that she stays there until *you* bring her back to the family group.

If she cries or tantrums, pretend to ignore her. Go to her when she has begun to quieten.

If she plays happily in her room, she has not necessarily turned the tables on you — she may still have got the message that her behaviour was unwelcome. Time will tell.

Persist for at least two weeks, whatever her response. If at the end of that time her unwanted behaviour is less frequent, then time-out is working. If it has not decreased, try another method.

Dr Christopher Green, in his book *Toddler Taming* (1984), points out that time-out can be valuable for separating the parties in an explosive confrontation — a value quite apart from the long-term effect of reducing unwanted behaviour. Dr Green's account of time-out is well worth reading.

Other unpleasant consequences

Ultimately it is up to you as a parent to find a consequence which will discourage your child from persisting with her problem behaviour. One criterion for a successful consequence is that it works, but this should not be the only consideration. Smacking, when used regularly, can teach a child that this is an acceptable way to behave. Your smacks may be returned or passed on to Baby. The same applies to tit-for-tat punishment: 'If you pull my hair, I'll pull yours.'

Adults sometimes assume that their responses will be unpleasant for a child, when in fact they are just the opposite. Shouting is a good example; children can find the spectacle of their parents in a rage quite fascinating!

It is not easy to find a consequence which effectively reduces the unwanted behaviour without creating new problems, as repeated smacking can do. But there is bound to be an answer. At Macquarie we have had most success with *ignoring* (for milder behaviours) and *time-out*. Perhaps you could try these first.

Always keep in mind that your aim is not so much to punish your child for what she has done wrong, as to *teach* her *not* to behave that way again. If you think about it this way, you will be basically on your child's side and both of you will find the behaviour change process easier.

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and in the situations where problems have been occurring.

9. **Involve everybody concerned in your behaviour change program.** After all, everyone needs some strategy to cope with a difficult behaviour, so it is no great imposition to ask them to use yours. Even quite young children can learn to respond in a way which gives no satisfaction to their erring brother or sister. Young children will almost inevitably bring their woes to you ('Mummy, Chris pushed me over'), giving you an opportunity to give guidance as well as comfort. ('Just walk right away from her when she pushes you. Don't even look at her. Come and

play with me instead.') It is just as important to involve everyone in praising good behaviour, and encouraging new skills.

10. **Keep a record of progress.** At least for the first two weeks, keep a tally of every time the problem behaviour occurs *and* every time your child uses the new skills you are trying to teach her. It can be so hard to know, when you're in the thick of it, whether things really are improving or not. This way, you'll be sure to know. A record kept for a few days *before* your teaching program begins will provide a sound basis for comparison. Keeping a record, both before and after teaching begins, will help you to make decisions about changing or continuing your program.

Looking After Yourself

Only a super-parent, if such a creature exists, would be able to follow all these points consistently. Coping with a behaviour problem is far from easy, even for the most experienced parents and teachers. Vent your frustrations away from your child if you can, but if you explode from time to time, don't be discouraged. If you know where you are heading, and are working to a plan, you will get there in the end.

This might be a good time to seek out some extra support from family and friends or plan some time for yourself away from your responsibilities at home.

Give yourself plenty of credit for each little bit of progress your child makes. Overcoming this problem will make life easier, not only for you but for your child. By teaching her to behave in a way that will allow her to make more friends, learn more skills and find pleasure in constructive behaviour, you are opening new doors of experience for her and helping her towards a richer life.

AVOIDING BEHAVIOUR PROBLEMS

If your child has never had a behaviour problem, just keep on going as you have in the past. Chances are you have already been using some of the principles explained in this chapter. They are, after all, methods that many, many people have tried and found true.

If your child has not yet reached the age where discipline is a real issue, or if you have overcome one problem and want to avoid another, here are some suggestions for handling normal naughty behaviours so that they do not escalate into problems.

1. **Always give attention and praise for good behaviour.** It is so easy to treat times when a child is being 'good' as time-off, as opportunities to start the dinner or water the garden or read a book or collapse and gather strength. You *can* do these things and still give attention as well — an encouraging word, a pat on the head in passing, a comment on the game in progress. This conscious praising of good behaviour may feel odd at first, but it quickly becomes a habit. It is certainly well worth aiming for. So many behaviour problems arise out of a need for attention that is not being met through appropriate means.

2. **Have clear, simple, consistent rules.** Make sure your child is in no doubt about what is acceptable to you. Make allowances for your child's age and ability level, but once you are sure that she *can* conform to a certain rule, make it very clear that this is what you expect of her. Of course she will test out your rules, so think ahead about how you will respond when she does. Let her be proud of herself when she remembers the rules you have set.

3. **Give positive directions.** Life with an active preschooler can seem like an endless stream of directions — 'Don't do that', 'Don't touch this', 'Stop doing that' and above all, 'NO'. If these phrases have a dreary ring to you, they certainly will to your child. After a while those 'No's' and 'Don'ts' go in one ear and out the other. Phrase your directions in terms of what your child *should* be doing. They will sound more varied (and hence more interesting) and more positive. If you save your 'No's' and 'Don'ts' for the more critical situations, they will have more impact when they're really needed.

4. **Have a range of responses to 'naughty' behaviour.** If you always deliver your most dramatic response for every instance of naughtiness, you have nothing in reserve when a really serious situation (such as a threat to safety) arises. Have a *hierarchy* of responses and use the mildest one that will work in a given situation. We discussed some of these earlier in this chapter, but if you aren't dealing with an entrenched problem there are a few more options you can consider:

- **Moving the furniture:** Put things out of reach or otherwise reorganise things to avoid confrontations. This is especially worthwhile in the early stages of development before a child can be expected to know the difference between Mummy's expensive camera and her own toy one or between Jamie's schoolbooks and her own scribble pad.

- **Ignoring:** If an act has no effect whatsoever, maybe she won't try it again. Even if you have to physically intervene, you can still avoid looking at or speaking to your child. If another child is involved (innocently) in the incident, give all your attention to her, while pointedly excluding the offender.
- **Suggesting an alternative:** Giving a positive direction can sometimes distract a child from her mischief and set her on a more constructive path.
- **A firm 'No':** Sharply delivered, 'No' or 'Stop' can distract your child from what she is doing, or was about to do, so that you can give a positive direction. Don't repeat your 'No' — if it's going to work it will work the first time. Familiarity breeds deafness.
- **A verbal reminder:** Give your child the chance to correct herself. 'What did Daddy just say?' or 'What's our rule about knives?' will at least give her the chance to reconsider.
- **Withdrawing privileges:** This generally works best with older children, but it can work with younger children when the privilege can be withdrawn immediately. Announcing that there will be no ice-cream following a transgression during the first course may mean nothing, but removal of the ice-cream for a transgression during dessert may get the message across.
- **Time-out:** This means isolating the child for a brief period, as discussed in Box 6.2.
- **Smacking:** Smacking can be avoided altogether, but most parents feel it is justified under some circumstances. Keep in mind that regular smacking can teach a child that it is an acceptable way to behave: 'If Daddy smacks me, why shouldn't I smack too?' Reserve your smacks for potentially dangerous escapades, such as running out on to the road.
- **Always avoid:**
  arguing about rules.
  shouting (unless you can't help it).
  changing your mind.
  giving up halfway.
  tit-for-tat punishments ('You pinched me so I'll pinch you').

These things are bound to make matters worse and there are so many alternatives.

5. **Let the child know that it's what she is doing that you don't like. You still like her.** Few parents need to be told this, but it's not hard to give the wrong impression without meaning to. Make your feelings clear through what you say to the child. There is a world of difference between 'You will stay in your room because you're such a naughty girl' and 'You will stay in your room because you climbed out the window'.

STORIES FROM PARENTS

During the preparation of this book we asked a group of parents to tell us their experiences with changing problem behaviours or the techniques they have found helpful in responding to naughtiness. Here are their stories.

Lan, mother of May-May, aged 18 months:
May-May sometimes pulls my hair or bites when she plays with me. I simply put her down on the floor and walk away. I take away her most precious person — MOTHER. I find that very effective.

Sarah, mother of Joseph, aged 3 years:
We had a problem for a while with Joey screaming at the top of his voice whenever one of us was on the phone. It was impossible to ignore, because you couldn't hear the conversation! I tried giving him a special toy when I was on the phone, and that worked for a little while, but then the screaming started again. In the end I put him in his room each time it happened. It was really embarrassing, because he screamed even louder at first and the person on the other end could still hear him. I used to pretend to ring people up, so I could teach him when it didn't matter! After three days, no more screaming! I think it also helped to interrupt the conversation once in a while and tell him how good he was being, but I don't need to do that any more, either.

Stuart, father of Nathan, aged 2½ years:
The thing I found hardest was when he howled when I drove the car. He went through a phase of hating his car seat, and we have to drive a fair bit, living miles from anywhere. A friend suggested this method. When he started to howl, I stopped the car and got out and sat on the bonnet until he started to quieten down. Ghastly when it rained! I don't think this would work if you had other kids in the car, but it worked for us after about four trips. Also, when he was quiet I talked to him, and I never said a word or even looked at him when he yelled.

Natalie, mother of Peter, aged 2 years:
Peter went through a phase of rocking about a year ago. It started gradually, and before we knew where we were he was rocking to and fro all the time. He didn't touch his toys or anything. He rocked in bed, too, to get himself to sleep. They told us this was self-stimulating behaviour, and it could become a really big problem. Basically, we distracted him out of it — we always got him involved in something else. I got really upset about it for a while and a few times I yelled at him, but that didn't help. It took quite a while to stop it — he does it sometimes in bed at night — but we concentrated on showing him how to play and he plays well, now.

Matt, father of Karina, aged 4 years:
Pam [his wife] had a big success with teaching Karina to be gentle with the baby. Things were really bad for a while. You couldn't leave them alone in the room together. I suppose Karina was jealous, because up till then [the birth of the second child] she'd had Pam all to herself. Pam picked Kate up each time something happened and turned her back on Karina. She also told Karina ways to help her — wiping Kate's face and so on. And she got lots of cuddles for being gentle. Karina took her aggressions out on her doll, for a while, but now she just adores both of them. Except she reckons Dolly's cleverer than Kate is!

Box 6.3 Ten Points for Changing Behaviour

Here again are the ten points we have made about teaching your child to meet your objectives for her behaviour:

1. Know your objectives.
2. Make sure everybody concerned knows your objectives.
3. Decide on a consequence for the unwanted behaviour.
4. Present the consequence immediately.
5. Be consistent.
6. Expect the behaviour to get worse before it gets better.
7. Reinforce your child's constructive behaviour.
8. Teach your child positive skills to replace her problem behaviours.
9. Involve everybody concerned in your behaviour change program.
10. Keep a record of progress.

Small Steps is an Early Intervention Program for young children with developmental delays. The kit consists of eight books, and an optional videotape program.

Book 1: Introduction to Small Steps
This introductory book presents the background to Small Steps, and suggests ways in which it can be used.

Book 2: Your Child's Program
This book explains how to select goals for the individual child, and how to help the child achieve these goals in the context of family life.

Book 3: Communication Skills
This book is concerned with language learning, at both the preverbal and verbal levels. Language is seen in the context of social interaction, and skills are taught through play and 'everyday' activities.

Book 4: Gross Motor Skills
This book presents the skills which involve the large muscles of the body. These enable a child to sit, crawl, walk, climb, catch a ball and so on. It has been prepared by physiotherapists experienced with young children with disabilities.

Book 5: Fine Motor Skills
Fine Motor skills use the small muscles of the hand and eye. They range from the baby's first grasp of the parent's finger to complex skills such as drawing and cutting. Also included are problem-solving skills and the development of concepts such as colour, shape and size.

Book 6: Receptive Language Skills
Receptive Language skills involve the understanding of the language of others. They enable a child to attend to what others are saying, to follow directions and, most importantly, to use language him or herself.

Book 7: Personal and Social Skills
In this book we look at skills that help children to relate to others, to play and to achieve independence in eating, toileting, dressing and grooming.

Book 8: Developmental Skills Inventory
The D.S.I. draws together the individual parts of Small Steps. It is a series of checklists used for assessing the child and as a guide for setting objectives.

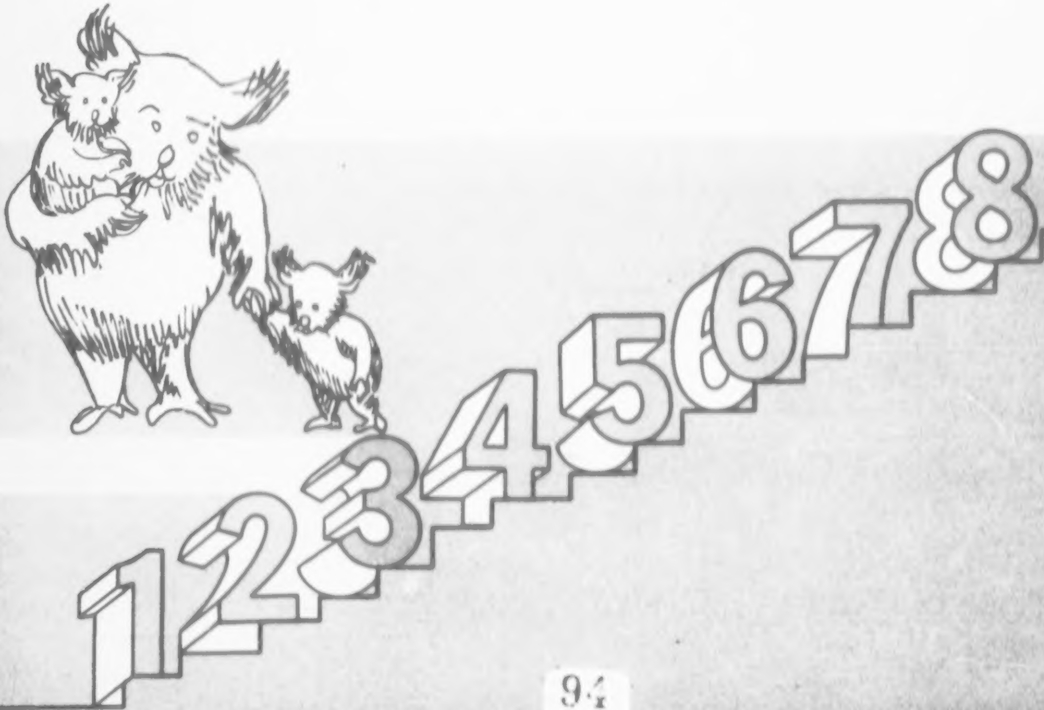
SMALL STEPS

AN EARLY INTERVENTION PROGRAM FOR CHILDREN WITH DEVELOPMENTAL DELAYS

Book 3 Communication Skills

Moira Pieterse and Robin Treloar
with Sue Cairns

Macquarie University Sydney



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CHAPTER 1

Language Learning

The need to communicate with others is one of the most basic human needs, and no parent needs to be told how important communication skills are for their child. For the disabled child, the ability to express needs and desires, request help and respond to the conversation of others opens many doors. It gives the child a measure of control over his environment and a means to learn more from it.

Despite longstanding acknowledgment of its importance, educationalists have been slower to find ways of teaching communication skills compared to other skill areas. It isn't hard to see why. You can take a child's hand and guide him to put his spoon to his mouth or draw a circle or point to a picture, but you cannot physically guide him to talk. Some programs based on highly structured behaviour modification techniques were successful in teaching children to say words during lesson time but these did not teach children to communicate effectively in their everyday lives.

In the past three decades researchers have come to take a much broader view of what communication involves. Techniques have been developed which take into account the child's *need* to communicate and his interactions with people and objects around him. We know now that language learning should be as much as possible an integral part of everyday life, beginning in the very first weeks of life. We know that adults who are aware of what communication involves, alert to each tiny step forward and prepared for the next step, can make an enormous difference to a child's acquisition of language. It is perhaps ironic that educationalists have come to this understanding largely through their observations of parents, as they interact with their babies and children.

In Book 3 we suggest answers to some of the most basic questions about language learning and present an approach that can help you to develop your existing skills in encouraging your child to communicate. We will present the milestones of normal language development. We will show you how to evaluate your child's current language ability, and talk about what children need to learn, and when.

WHAT'S INVOLVED IN LANGUAGE LEARNING — AND TEACHING

Language (or communication) involves much more than just talking. There are many people who cannot talk but can communicate effectively through sign language. And there are people who can talk but who are poor communicators! As well as talking, language involves:

- *Listening* and *understanding*
- *Responding* to the language of others
- *Taking turns* with others in conversation.

These skills are accessible to babies and young children who are still a long way from talking. As language develops, the child acquires:

- The ability to meet a range of needs through language — social, emotional and material
- The ability to *express a range of meanings*, through gestures, then words, then combinations of words
- The ability to express finer shades of meaning through the use of *grammatical forms* — correct word order, plurals, tenses and so on
- The ability to produce a wide range of sounds, generally referred to as *articulation*
- The ability to both *initiate* and *follow up* in conversation — to both expect a response from others, and respond to what others say. This ability involves the listening, understanding, responding and turn-taking skills presented above.

Perhaps this all sounds a bit complicated — it is complicated! Most children are able to sort out the complexities of language for themselves, but this does not happen automatically. It happens because parents, whether consciously or instinctively, adapt their own language to suit the child's level of development, and show the child, by their responses, how rewarding and useful his attempts to communicate are.

When a child has a disability that makes it difficult for him to learn communication skills, his parents and teachers will need to be more deliberate in their approach — more alert to what he is doing now and what he needs to learn next. They will need to be especially aware of the kinds of games, activities and situations that encourage their child to communicate. They will need to consider how their own talking and listening and responding are contributing to their child's learning. There is a lot to think about, a lot to keep in mind, but most of the parents with whom we have worked at Macquarie assure us that in time this way of thinking comes to seem quite natural. As we said earlier, the techniques for teaching language are based on ways in which parents interact with their children. Much of what you read in these chapters will seem quite familiar to you — a matter of commonsense.

Can My Child Learn to Talk?

Most children, including many severely disabled children, *can* learn to talk. In those few cases where talking cannot be learned, a system of gestures or signs can be taught instead.

If your child is still a baby, you have plenty of time in which to discover whether he will be better served by a gestural or sign language. The approach to early language learning outlined in Chapter 2 provides a good basis for gestural as well as verbal language.

How Is Language Taught in the Macquarie Program?

Language teaching in the Macquarie University Down's Syndrome Program is based on *T.E.L.L.* — *Teach Early Language for Living* (Cairns and Pieterse, 1983).

T.E.L.L. was designed to translate recent theories of language development into a comprehensive and practical program to meet the needs of young moderately and severely disabled children. The essential features of *T.E.L.L.* are these:

- From babyhood, children are encouraged to attend to others, to take turns and to imitate a range of sounds and gestures.
- Even before talking begins, children are shown that they can use their sounds and gestures to meet a range of needs.
- As the child begins to talk, objectives are set in several different aspects of language at once, continuing earlier work on turn-taking, teaching different uses of language, teaching a range of different kinds of words and gradually introducing the basic rules of grammar.
- The child's understanding of language is developed through the Receptive Language Sequences of the Developmental Skills Inventory (Book 8).
- Teaching takes place in natural settings, using materials and activities that interest the child. The teacher aims to make language work enjoyable and relevant to the child, so that he will want to communicate.

In this and the following chapters we will talk about the most important features and principles of the *T.E.L.L.* program and how you can make use of them in your own home. We would encourage you to read widely in the area of language development and you may wish to refer directly to *T.E.L.L.* yourself.

BEFORE YOU START

As in all areas of development, it is necessary to assess the child before teaching can begin. But because we are concerned here with the child's spontaneous interaction with people and objects around him, 'formal' assessment sessions, where the child is asked to follow precise directions, are inappropriate.

In the following chapters, you will find a series of *checklists*. These checklists should be completed on the basis of close observation of your child during normal everyday activities. For the child who is talking, we suggest taking a *sample* of your child's language, by writing down all his attempts to communicate, and the context in which they occur, throughout the day.

Along with each checklist, you will find suggestions about where teaching should begin.

Keep in mind that you will probably need to work towards several different objectives at once, so work through *all* the checklists on which your child is able to score before you begin teaching.

As well as working through the checklists, look at the guide to normal language development later in this chapter. What *your* child can do and what he needs to learn next are more important than what the average child can do, but it is helpful to take a broader perspective from time to time and check your child's progress on the normal milestones of development.

WHAT TO TEACH

We have already talked in general terms about some of the things a child needs to learn in order to communicate effectively. Let's look at these skills now in a little more detail.

For the Child Who Is Not Yet Talking

Depending on how your child scores on the checklists, you can choose objectives from one or more of the areas described below.

Attending and play skills
Babies can join in 'conversations' well before they are able to use words. To do this, they must be able to pay attention to what other people are doing and, with others, to attend to objects in play. As babies grow, they use their play skills to explore their surroundings and hence to discover things that they *want* to communicate about.

Turn-taking
Conversation is a two-way process, involving listening and waiting as well as speaking. Babyhood is the ideal time to start learning to take turns — with sounds or actions or in simple games. Older children who are not yet talking can also benefit immensely from practice in turn-taking.

Imitating
Imitation plays a large part in the learning of new sounds — sounds which will in time be used to make words. Most babies love to imitate and babies only a few days old have been observed to imitate their mother's facial expressions. Imitation activities need not be restricted to the making of sounds — actions can be imitated too.

Using sounds and gestures for different purposes
Children need to learn that the sounds and gestures that they make can affect the behaviour of those around them and help them to exercise some control over their environments. Sounds and gestures can be used to say 'hello' or 'goodbye', to demand things that are out of reach, to ask for help, to share information, to reject unwanted food, toys or events, and so on.

Understanding
Children who are not yet talking can learn to understand the words that describe the people, objects, actions and events around them.

For the Child Who Is Talking

All the areas described above remain important for the child who is learning to talk. Children now learn to take turns with words as well as with actions and sounds. Imitation is a major way of learning new words. And the child gradually learns to use words, rather than sounds or gestures, to meet his different social, emotional and material needs.

Some additional areas also become important at this stage.

Expressing different kinds of meanings
A child needs more than a large vocabulary. Certainly we want him to learn lots of words, but we need to make sure that these words allow him to talk about all kinds of different things. A child may have a vocabulary of 50 words, but if these words are all the names of things (car, ball, house, Daddy, apple and so on) he is not going to be able to talk about what things are doing or where they are or what they are like. Nor is he going to be able to combine his words into sensible phrases. We look closely in Chapter 3 at all the different kinds of words the child needs to learn.

Using grammatical forms
A child can communicate his meaning, up to a point, without being grammatically correct. So we don't need to be concerned about grammar until talking is well under way. But if a child's language is to sound as much as possible like everyone else's, and if he is to express the finer shades of meaning, he will need to acquire grammatical skills.

Articulating words
Articulation, or pronunication, is a source of difficulty for many disabled children, even though their other communication skills might be quite advanced. We discuss this problem further on page 3–6.

Initiating and following up
Mature conversational skills involve a balance between taking the lead and responding to what others say. Children with good turn-taking skills frequently achieve this balance without any special teaching. But sometimes such a balance does not develop naturally. There are children who chatter away about the things that interest them, but do not attend to what others say. Then there are children who only speak when spoken to, rarely initiating a conversation. Neither extreme allows true and effective communication, and righting the balance becomes an important area for teaching.

Box 1.1 Basic Principles for Language Teaching

- Give your child time to make a response.
  Listen.
  Wait.
- Talk to your child about the things that interest him.
- Focus your child's attention on particular objectives through planned activities.
- Reinforce your child naturally, conversationally.

HOW TO TEACH

If the list of *what* to teach seems somewhat daunting, you will be relieved to hear that many of these skills can be taught at the same time — as long as you are aware of what you are aiming for.

What's more, most language teaching can — and should — be part of normal everyday activities, as a natural extension of your play with and care for your child. At some stages of your child's development you will find it helpful to set special times aside, in which you can focus on specific activities and goals, but from your child's point of view, these sessions will fulfil the same function as play sessions. The secret lies in *planning*. It is planning — the selection of objectives and consideration of what techniques you could use — that will take the most time. Many parents find that the teaching of language adds interest and enjoyment to even the most routine household and child-care activities.

You will find detailed information about how to teach specific skills in the chapters that follow. We will look now at the basic features of effective language teaching.

Expect a Response From Your Child

Whether your child is an infant learning to look at your face or a preschooler learning to combine words into phrases, always convey by your manner that you expect that he *will* respond. *Give him time*. Unless his attention has clearly wandered, *wait* for him to respond.

Give him time and opportunities to initiate interactions too. If you are always talking, always taking the initiative, your child will not have the opportunity to discover his own role in the communication process.

It *is* important to talk to your child, but aim to talk as a contributor to a two-way conversation, even if your child can respond only by looking and listening. Pause to sense his responses. Wait. Give him time. Expect that he will join in — and he will!

Talk About What Interests Your Child

With a tiny baby, you can talk about almost anything. For parents who are naturally quiet and find it difficult to talk to an apparently unresponsive baby (and there are many parents who feel this way), talking about what *you* are doing is a good start. After all, *you* are the baby's chief source of interest!

As the child begins to focus his attention on objects and movements around him, take your cue from the direction of his gaze or his choice of toy.

As he becomes more active and playful, the range of possible topics will steadily increase. His preferences will show you the kinds of things that he wants to communicate about. Before he is talking, you can teach him to recognise the names of things he likes. And the things he likes will provide an excellent source for the words you teach him to say.

Don't restrict yourself to talking about names. Talk about movements or actions and about textures, colours and sounds.

Help an Active Child to Focus His Attention

A small child will often tend to 'flit' from one thing to another. If you rely solely on following his lead it becomes hard to focus his attention on the meanings or uses of language that he needs to learn. Yet you want your language teaching to arise out of his interests.

You can solve this problem by setting aside times each day when you play with your child in a prepared setting, in which a limited range of toys or activities is available. Choose toys and activities that you know he favours, but exclude distractions for a while. You can retain an element of choice by presenting several alternative ways of working towards the same objective. If you want him to learn the word 'ball', for example, you might sit out in the garden with a box of balls of different colours and sizes, and try rolling, bouncing, throwing, hide-and-seek games and so on. Your child can choose which ball he plays with, and what he does with it, but at the same time you can keep his attention focused on your objective.

Use Natural Conversational Reinforcement

Avoid saying 'good boy' or 'good talking'. Nobody says this to us when we talk. Instead, respond by letting the child know that you have understood and accepted what he has said or done. If your child gurgles, smile and make noises back to him. If he gives you a toy (a very communicative gesture), make a special point of playing with it. If he asks for something, give it to him if possible, and if it's something he can't have, make it clear you have understood his request, even though you can't comply.

This natural conversational reinforcement shows the child the value and effectiveness of his attempts to communicate. It can also be used to show him how he could *extend* his language skills, in a totally non-threatening way:

Tommy: Want ball.
Mother: You want the ball. Here you are. You can throw the ball.
Tommy: Throw ball.
Mother: Throw ball up. There it goes!
Tommy: Want ball! Want ball!
Mother: OK. Mummy throws the ball.

THE SEQUENCE OF NORMAL LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT

In language, as in all areas of development, what *your* child is doing now and is ready to learn next is much more important than what the average child is doing at a given age. But it can be helpful to know the pattern of normal development, and we present here some of the major milestones to age 4 and the approximate ages at which they occur.

The range that is considered 'normal' is very broad in the area of language acquisition. Many children do not begin to use words until after their second birthday, yet in the long run they progress quite normally and become competent talkers. So use this outline cautiously — the *sequence* of development is more important than the age levels shown.

0 to 3 Months

- The baby vocalises only by crying at first, but gradually begins to *vocalise without crying*. You will hear *cooing or small throaty noises*. Next he begins to use a *vowel sound* — just one to start with. As he approaches 3 months, he begins to *laugh*.
- At the same time as he is learning to make these new non-crying sounds, the baby is beginning to respond to the talking of others. First he *responds by facial or body movements* when others talk to him. Then he begins to *vocalise when talked to, with soft sounds*.

3 to 6 Months

- The baby can now make two *different vowel sounds* and he *babbles when alone*.
- He begins to *put a consonant and a vowel together*, to make sounds such as 'ba' or 'da'.
- He now vocalises differently to express different feelings. If he can blow raspberries, or make other such gestures, he will *imitate* these gestures when adults make them to him. He will also *attempt to imitate talk* in the sounds he makes.

6 to 9 Months

- By now he can make at least *four different sounds*. He produces *repetitive, two-syllable patterns* such as 'dada' or 'mama'.
- The child is able to *take turns with an adult*, making sounds or actions.
- He *shouts to gain attention*, and *protests* when someone does something he doesn't like by crying or making a loud noise.
- He *smiles and vocalises when greeting a familiar person*.
- His imitation skills are increasing; he can *imitate actions* such as clapping or waving bye-bye. He will also *imitate sounds* that he can already make, when someone makes them to him.

9 to 12 Months

- The baby now uses *intonation patterns similar to those of adult speech*; an obvious *demanding* pattern often appears first. He will look at something, and then look at an adult, gesturing or vocalising, *sharing information* about what he has seen. He *vocalises to initiate an interaction* with an adult.
- He can *imitate facial movements* such as coughing, blinking or moving his tongue on his lips and he likes to *imitate an action that is paired with a sound*, such as rubbing his tummy and making a 'yum yum' sound.

12 to 15 Months

- Now the baby enjoys 'conversations' — he *vocalises interactively using inflection* to keep a conversation going. He likes to *give objects to* *people*, perhaps vocalising as he does so. By now he *uses consistent sounds and gestures to greet and farewell*.

- He can *imitate words with approximations* — such as ‘bu’ or ‘up’ for ‘cup’.
- He *uses two words consistently*, though these words may still be approximations.
- He *gives a word or an approximation in response to questions*, such as ‘what’s that?’
- His intonation patterns are becoming more mature. You will now recognise *questioning and exclaiming intonation patterns* as well as the earlier demanding pattern.

15 to 18 Months

- The child has now mastered about *four to six words*, usually naming words, a rejection word (usually ‘no’) and greetings. When he does not know the words, he will *vocalise in conjunction with gestures* such as pointing, giving or waving.
- He *attempts to sing with familiar songs*.
- He is now a skilful imitator and often *echoes prominent words, or the last word spoken*, in adult talk.

18 Months to 2 Years

- The child can now say about *25 words*. These include *words for naming objects and people*, *consistent words for greeting and farewelling*, at least *two words to describe actions*, a word to *denote or request ‘more’* and the *rejection word ‘no’*.
- He can *imitate two-word phrases*, though he may not use them spontaneously.
- His speech is *intelligible to adults who know him well*, at least two-thirds of the time.

2 to 3 Years

- During this year, the child gradually acquires more words. He has a *vocabulary of at least 50 words* at 2½ years, and a *vocabulary of at least 200 words* by the time he is 3.
- Early in the year he learns to *combine words into two-word phrases*. By the end of the year he *uses several three-word phrases* as well.
- He is adept at *taking turns with others in conversation*. Early in the year he will do this mainly through single words, but gradually he uses more phrases until he is able to maintain an extended conversation on a single topic using two- and three-word phrases.
- He is beginning to acquire grammatical skills such as *plurals*, the *‘ing’ ending*, the *possessive ’s* and *pronouns* such as ‘I’, ‘me’ and ‘you’.
- He is able to *recite a nursery rhyme*, though he may make some errors.
- He chats away to himself when he is playing and his *talk is quite intelligible*.

3 to 4 Years

- As he progresses through this year, the child uses *three-word phrases* more and more frequently, until he is using phrases of three words or more for 80% of the time.
- He *asks ‘wh’ questions* such as ‘Where’s my bag?’, ‘Why is Fido barking?’, ‘Who’s that boy?’ or ‘Which one is mine?’
- He can *relate experiences* he has had in the recent past.
- He can *give his full name*, first and last, on request.
- He can *answer many questions*, including questions about the function of things, such as ‘What do we do with our eyes?’ and ‘What is a stove for?’
- He is gaining more control over his voice and can *whisper or shout*.
- He can say at least *three nursery rhymes* and can *sing a simple song*.
- In the area of grammar he uses the *articles* ‘a’ and ‘the’, *negatives* such as ‘isn’t’ and ‘couldn’t’ and *third person pronouns* such as ‘him’, ‘her’ and ‘them’.
- He is able to *repeat a six-word sentence*.
- His *intonation patterns are the same as those of the adults around him*.

THE CHILD WHO NEEDS SPECIALIST ATTENTION

The assistance of a speech pathologist is invaluable when a child is having difficulty producing one or more of the sounds needed for mature language. Although there is much that a parent can do to help here, it is beyond the scope of a book such as this to describe the detailed procedures involved.

When considering whether your child’s articulation is delayed, keep in mind that many quite normal children have still not mastered all the language sounds by the time they start school. The table at the end of this chapter will help you to make an initial evaluation of your child’s articulation. If in doubt, seek a professional assessment. Specialist help is also recommended if your child is significantly behind the normal milestones outlined above and does not make progress on the methods described in these chapters.

Table 1.1
This table presents guidelines only. Use it to help you to decide whether or not a full assessment of your child's articulation is required.

Age	*Notes*	*Acceptable substitutions*
Three years	There is much variability in sound production at this age. As well as the substitutions shown, final consonants may be deleted, for example: 'ba' for ball 'do' for dog	'wewow' for yellow 'thoap' for soap 'thoo' for zoo 'dod' for dog 'tup' for cup plus those shown below
Four years	The following sounds are likely to be correct wherever they occur in a word: b, p, d, t, c, g, m n, ng, l s and z are often, but not always, correct.	'sip' for ship 'lellow' for yellow 'fick' for thick 'shair' for chair 'wain' for rain 'ban' for van 'wion' for lion plus those shown below
Five years	A child at this age should have most sounds correct, wherever they occur in a word. Substitutions such as those shown will probably correct themselves without specific teaching.	'seben' for seven 'tanks' for thanks

If your child is seeing a speech pathologist, it is wise to discuss with her any language programs — such as this one — that you are considering trying at home. You or your therapist might like to refer directly to *T.E.L.L.* for more information on this approach. Please refer to the resource list in Book 1 for details.

SUMMING UP

Here again are some of the points about language that we would like to emphasise, before you go on to the next chapter.

Language involves more than talking. Language involves listening and understanding. It involves taking turns with others — sometimes initiating and sometimes following up.

Language can be used to meet many different needs. The child needs to learn about the *uses* of language, as well as the wide range of *meanings* that can be expressed.

Teaching language involves listening as well as talking. Always give your child time to make a response. Base your teaching on your child's interests. You can make use of these interests during everyday activities, or in specially planned play sessions.

Use the natural consequences of your child's language to reinforce him for communicating.

Before you start teaching make a detailed observation of what he can do now. Start teaching at the level that is just right for him.

Even if your child is already talking, we suggest that you read Chapter 2, *Teaching Language to the Preverbal Child*. Many of the skills taught at this level remain important after talking is established.

We hope that language teaching will be an enjoyable process, for you, as well as for your child.

CHAPTER 2

Teaching Language to the Preverbal Child

The preverbal child is the child who is not yet talking. All children learn many non-verbal communication skills before they learn to talk. These skills may be vocal (making a sound) or they may be actions such as pointing, reaching or pulling a face. As we saw in Chapter 1, the ability to listen and attend to others is also part of preverbal language development. So too is turn-taking, which prepares the child to take part in conversation. Most importantly, children learn *before* they start to speak that communication can have many different functions, or purposes, and that they can *use* their communication skills to fulfil a wide range of social, emotional and practical needs. They can learn to show people what they want by pointing, greet and farewell by waving, reject things by head-shaking and so on.

The preverbal stage of communication is a *normal* and, indeed, *essential* stage through which all children pass. A rich and varied experience of communicating with others at this stage is a firm foundation for effective and satisfying verbal communication later on. Many older children who experience difficulty in learning to talk will benefit from extra practice of preverbal communication skills.

Your child may not be talking because she is still an infant, or she may be an older child with a delay in this area. The procedures for developing her communication skills will be much the same. The activities we suggest in this chapter have been selected with young children in mind, but they can easily be adapted to relate to the interests of an older child.

We will look at five crucial areas of preverbal language learning:

- Learning to attend and respond to others
- Learning to play
- Learning to take turns
- Learning to imitate
- Learning to use communication skills in everyday life.

These areas overlap considerably and you will probably be working on extending your child's skills in two or more areas at a time. We suggest that you read about all the areas and complete all the checklists on which your child can score before deciding what your objectives should be.

LEARNING TO ATTEND AND RESPOND TO OTHERS

If you have already assessed your child using the D.S.I., as discussed in Book 2, Chapter 1, you will already have an accurate picture of your child's attending and responding skills. If you have set objectives in this area, then you are already working on language! If you haven't assessed your child yet, but are instinctively encouraging your child to look at your face and attend while you talk to her, to look at toys or to respond to simple directions, then you, too, are already working on language.

Attending skills should not be seen as a separate prerequisite to communication. They are part of a continuum which begins when the child first makes eye contact and continues until she can express all her needs and thoughts. Attending skills don't cease to be important once talking begins. Children continue to develop and extend their attending and responding skills throughout the preschool years, and beyond.

If your child has already begun to attend to your face and respond when you talk to her, you will be able to work on other areas of language development while gradually extending her attending and responding skills through following the Receptive Language Sequences in Part Two.

If your child is not yet attending, make this your number one priority for the time being. Attending is crucial not only to communication but to all areas of development.

Checklists 2.1 and 2.2 will help you to decide what your priorities should be. Answer all the questions on the basis of careful observation of your child. Small children are rarely equally responsive at all times of day, so base your observations on those times when your child is most alert and content.

If you answered 'no' to any of the questions in Checklist 2.1, then teaching your child to attend should be your first priority. (This is not to say that you should forget about other areas of her development. If your child is at this stage, your Gross Motor objectives are likely to be extremely important too.)

If you answered 'no' to any of the questions in Checklist 2.2, your child's attending and responding skills will still be a very high priority. But she may well be ready — or nearly ready — to achieve in other areas of language development as well, so have a close look at these other areas.

If you answered 'yes' to all the questions in Checklist 2.2, your child has a good basis for extending her attending and responding skills and for achieving in other areas of language development.

Either way, we suggest that you now carry out a detailed assessment using the Developmental Skills Inventory in Book 8 beginning with Sequences RL.A (Listening and Attending), RL.B (Responding to Gestures and Simple Directions) and PS.A (Socialisation and Play). The detailed discussions of these sequences in Books 6 and 7 will provide you with information about how to assess and teach each skill.

We will go on now to look at some basic principles for teaching children to attend and respond.

Checklist 2.1 Attending Skills 1

	Yes	*No*
Does your child look momentarily at your face when you speak to her?		
Does your child watch your eyes and mouth at least half the time, when you talk to her for one whole minute?		
Does your child look at an object held about 30 cm from her face?		
Does your child show by a change in her body movement that she knows what is coming when you make a move to pick her up or show her her bottle?		

Checklist 2.2 Attending Skills 2

	Yes	*No*
Does your child turn her eyes and head to find you when you call to her?		
Does your child sit still when well supported in a chair, and keep her attention fixed on you or an object you are showing her, for at least a minute?		
Does your child look at an object or picture *with* you — that is, does she glance between you and the object or picture, showing her awareness of both, for at least two minutes?		
Does your child respond to simple requests when they are accompanied by a gesture? For example, will she give you an object when you hold out your hand and say 'Give'?		
Does your child wave goodbye, clap her hands or perform any other simple gesture when you ask her to, without demonstrating or helping her?		

Ways to Encourage Attending and Responding

You can encourage your child to attend and respond to you in everything you do together. The suggestions below refer mainly to the baby or older immobile child, but they can easily be adapted to help the child who is active.

Talk to your child about what you are doing, as you are doing it. A few simple phrases with pauses between are as effective as a lot of chatter. Call her by name and wait for her to look at you before you continue talking.

Pair your talking with smiling and touching. This will add to her enjoyment of your face and voice.

Hold your face close to hers when you talk to her. Small babies focus best on objects about 25 to 30 cm away. Bend close to her as you change her nappy. Put her baby chair on the bench in the kitchen, so that you can easily move close to her as you work. Place her on her tummy on your chest, supporting her shoulders so that she can look into your face. Her depth of focus will gradually increase, so be alert for this.

Guide her hands towards your face, helping her to touch and explore what she sees. This can be a good way of re-establishing her interest when it has wandered.

Give your child time to respond. Don't be discouraged if she does not look or smile or follow your direction right away. Small children often need time to get organised. Repeating the same direction over and over again, such as saying 'Look . . . look . . . look', rarely helps a child to focus her attention. If she does not respond after two tries, with a little time after each, try a slightly different approach, such as a touch or a change in your tone of voice.

Let your child anticipate what is going to happen next by calling to her as you approach, holding out your arms before you pick her up, showing her the bottle or spoon before you start a feed and so on. In this way you will help her to become more alert to what is going on around her.

Show your child how happy you feel when she looks at you or responds to what you say. She needs to learn that being in contact with you is a rewarding experience.

Respond to any sounds she makes, however non-communicative or accidental they are. Start now to make a habit of making sounds back to her, often repeating the same sounds she has made. This will build a good foundation for turn-taking, later on.

Use the same words for the same events or actions. If you say 'up' each time you pick your child up, or 'Nappy time!' each time you start to change her nappy, she will not understand you at first, but this is an important way to help her to focus her attention on what is going on around her. In time she will understand. She will begin to learn the meanings of important words and she will have acquired the basis for following simple directions.

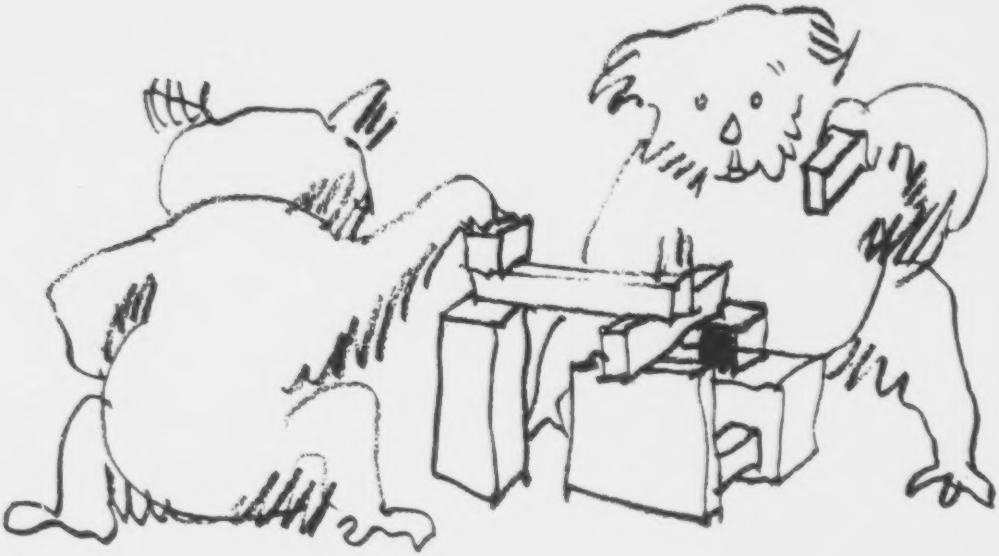
Involve all the family in encouraging your child to attend and respond. Brothers and sisters can be invaluable here. They might enjoy singing songs or pulling faces or tickling the baby. Help them to recognise that she is communicating with them.

Give your child things to look at when you're not around. A big brother or sister might draw a bright, simple picture of a face to put in the cot. Use mobiles and bright toys or household objects. If your child is still a small baby with a limited range of focus, make sure there are one or two objects quite close to her.

Spend time observing your child, to determine the things she does look at, the things she is interested in. Are there ways you could use these things to direct her attention to you? This is particularly important for the older inattentive child. You may need to enter into her world before you can expect her to attend to yours. Are you recognising her attempts at communication?

Aim for slow, steady progress. If your objectives are too big, you will easily become discouraged. Start from where your child is now, and aim to achieve just a tiny bit more each day or each week. It may help you to count the seconds for which your child attends to you; an increase in attending from 20 seconds to 30 seconds is a significant one, but one which could easily be missed.

Limit the distractions. If your child's attending and responding skills are not progressing using the techniques described above, try spending several short intervals each day with your child in an environment free from distractions. Choose a quiet place away from hectic household activities and remove objects that might distract your child's attention away from you. See this as a



temporary measure. As your child makes progress, encourage her to use her new skills within her normal everyday environment as well.

LEARNING TO PLAY

Play is the child's way of exploring her world. In Book 2, Chapter 5, we talked about the close relationship between playing and learning. Nowhere is this relationship more important than in the learning of language.

The child who enjoys playing and can attend to others as part of her play has an excellent basis for learning more advanced communication skills.

Children talk first about the things that interest them most. First words often include the names of people closest to the child, the names of favourite foods or drinks and social words such as 'hello' and 'bye-bye'. But the bulk of the child's early vocabulary is drawn from the names of things that she likes to play with and the actions she performs in her play.

But play is not important solely as a source of vocabulary. Play is an activity the child can share with others. Children learn conversational skills — including the preverbal skills of turn-taking and imitation — largely as an extension of shared play experiences. A child's ability to attend is extended as she explores what different objects can do and how other people can contribute to her games. Play provides reasons for the child to *want* to communicate — to ask for things she wants, to reject unwanted interference, to share information about what is happening and so on.

For the parent or teacher play provides an ideal setting for encouraging new language skills. Play allows the teacher to create opportunities and motivations for the child to communicate in a relaxed and natural way. Compare the following two scenarios:

> A child and her teacher sit opposite each other at a table.
> The teacher holds up a toy dog.
> 'This is a dog. Say *dog*.'
>
> A child and her teacher sit on the floor with a toy dog and a small blanket. The teacher allows the child to play with the dog, and talks about what the child is doing.
> Then the teacher hides the dog under the blanket.
> 'Oh! Where's the dog? Let's call him.
> 'Dog! Dog!
> 'Where can he be? You call him.'

The point is obvious and few parents would think of trying to teach their child to talk in the former structured and restricted way (though in the past, many teachers have). Structure is fine for teaching other kinds of skills — indeed, it's often necessary. But in language teaching it has limited potential.

This is not to say that language teaching through play is a haphazard matter. The teacher or parent must be just as aware of what she is aiming for, and what she is doing to get there, as she is in other areas of teaching. It is often necessary to plan the child's play environment so that critical features are emphasised. Far from being easy, teaching through play requires flexibility, quick thinking and sensitivity to where the child's interests are focused.

If your child is still a baby or has a physical handicap that makes playing difficult, you will aim to extend her play skills gradually as you teach other kinds of communication skills. Just about all the skills in the Fine Motor Sequences of the D.S.I. are designed to develop play skills; refer also to Sequence PS.A and consider the implications for play of the early Receptive Language skills.

If your child is more active and can manipulate objects to some extent but does not play constructively, you have a different kind of problem. The child who likes to throw everything, or bang everything, beyond the normal babyhood stages when these behaviours are first learned, may show little interest in the many uses of the objects around her and may have little reason to communicate with others about what she is doing. Many children play inappropriately because they haven't learned the skills that constructive play involves — skills of hand–eye co-ordination, building, turning and so on. We suggest that you start with a very thorough assessment of your child's Fine Motor skills using the D.S.I. and then teach her to extend her existing skills, relating each new step to the toys and other objects around her. When, for example, she learns to balance one block on another, you can introduce her to stacking games involving egg cartons, nesting cups, foam packing pieces, large boxes and so on. When she learns to lift the lid from a box, she can play all kinds of hide-and-seek games. As your child develops alternative ways of playing, you can help her to break her habit of throwing or banging by ensuring that only her constructive play is rewarded. We discuss this approach in Book 2, Chapter 6.

Sometimes the inability of an older child to play constructively has as its root an attending problem, rather than a Fine Motor problem: the child cannot attend to any one object for long enough to play. Many of the techniques suggested above under the heading Learning to Attend and Respond to Others can be adapted to the older, more active child.

There are, of course, children who progress well in other areas of development, and play quite appropriately, but who have a delay in their language development. If your child is like this, perhaps you have singled out these chapters on language and may feel little need to carry out a teaching program in other skill areas. We suggest that you begin by:

1. Involving your child in playing *with you*
2. Selecting toys that can be *shared*
3. Encouraging her to *take turns* with you with toys, games, actions, facial expressions and sounds.

Your child's play skills will be your greatest asset in teaching her to communicate and the rest of this chapter will give you more ideas about how to proceed.

Some parents, particularly first-time parents, are unused to playing with babies and small children. Our society provides few opportunities for us to learn this skill before we have children of our own. But parents *learn* to play, just as their children learn. We talk more fully about play in Book 2, Chapter 5, and you will find specific ideas later in this chapter and following each skill description in Books 4, 5, 6 and 7. There are many excellent resource books available through children's book shops. Your child will teach you, too, as you discover the things that encourage her to participate. Her responses will show you where you can begin to develop her ability to play.

LEARNING TO TAKE TURNS

As we said in the previous chapter, taking turns is the basis for conversation. When we converse with someone, we take turns with them. There is a difference between 'talking' and 'conversing'. Most of us have met people who are poor conversationalists despite their ability to talk. Some are people who don't know how to listen; however articulate they are they do not offer true conversation. Others listen, but have problems contributing to a conversation — often because of lack of confidence. A satisfying, constructive conversation involves two or more people *taking turns* to contribute and listening responsively while others take their turn.

The turn-taking pattern, on which conversation is based, can be established well before the child learns her first words and it can be maintained and extended as verbal skills develop. It is worth noting that turn-taking is a satisfying activity — and a communicative one — in its own right. Even if a child never learns to talk, an ability to take turns with another in making gestures or sounds, or in a game or shared task, will add greatly to her ability to interact socially.

Checklist 2.3 will help you to assess how well your child can take turns now. This checklist gives a range of activities in which children commonly take turns. You might like to substitute other activities to suit your child's interests or age level (see page 3–15 for suggestions). If you make substitutions, ensure that they cover a variety of different situations.

As you try each activity, talk to your child about what you are doing and give her lots of encouragement to participate. If you have other children, they might enjoy helping you with this assessment.

Checklist 2.3 Turn-taking

	Yes	*No*
Bath-time Splash your hand in Baby's bath water. Do this several times, pausing in between. Does she take turns to splash? Wash Baby's hand, then your hand, then Baby's hand again. Talk about what you are doing. Does she anticipate that it is your turn by looking at your hand, or attempting to wash it?		
Meal-time Give Baby a spoon and hold one yourself. Bang your spoon on the table. Does she bang her spoon and look at you to see if you will bang again? A spoonful for Baby, now one for Mummy, now Baby's turn again. Does she indicate that it is your turn again? (You may need to help her by holding her hand around the spoon; you will feel if she is trying to push the spoon towards you.)		
Bed-time Cuddle Teddy, then give him to Baby. Does she cuddle Teddy and then give him back to you so that you can have a turn, either spontaneously or when you ask her to? Pat a favourite cuddly toy. Say: 'Pat, pat, pat.' Does she have a turn and look at you, anticipating your turn?		
Play-time Bang a drum, then give her a turn to bang. Does she finish her turn and give the drumstick back to you, either spontaneously or when you ask for a turn? Sit opposite your child and roll a ball to her. Does she roll it back to you? (If accurate rolling is too hard for your child, score 'yes' for an attempt.)		
Any time Does your child hold 'conversations' with you, where you make a sound, then she makes a sound, then you make another sound and so on?		

If you answered 'yes' to at least one question in every section of Checklist 2.3, your child has made a good start in turn-taking. Keep looking for new ways to extend her turn-taking skills, encouraging her especially to take turns with sounds.

If you answered 'yes' to at least three questions, the basis for turn-taking is certainly there, and now is probably a good time for increasing the range of ways in which she takes turns. If your child is taking turns infrequently, or not at all, the discussion below will give you ideas about how to get turn-taking going.

Teaching Turn-taking Skills

There is no need to set aside special time to teach turn-taking skills. Turn-taking can become part of your relationship with your child, rather than something special to be practised only at certain times of day.

Turn-taking is a way of playing, and a way of talking, even before your child can respond with words.

You can teach **turn-taking with sounds**, whatever your child's age or stage of development. You can begin in your very first conversation with your newborn baby, but it's never too late to start. When you talk to your child, pause regularly and look at her expectantly, waiting for her to contribute. To begin with, respond to the tiniest squirm or sound or change in facial expression, however accidental it may seem, as if it was a voluntary contribution. As your child learns more deliberate and sophisticated responses, you can expect more from her, but initially, accept that you will 'stage' most of your conversations. By doing this you will be helping your child to attend to your face and voice, and familiarising her, gradually, with the turn-taking pattern. You will also be developing a useful habit in your own way of talking to your child, so that soon you won't have to think twice about encouraging conversation.

As well as pausing when you talk to your child, hold back sometimes and give her the chance to initiate. When you are busy with housework and your baby babbles (whether to you or otherwise) look up from what you are doing, give her a smile and chat back to her. Then give her a chance to respond to you.

At some point your child will begin to imitate directly the sounds you make to her. Imitation is a specialised form of turn-taking, and a very valuable one, as it helps the child to learn to make the sounds she will later use in speech. To encourage your child to imitate, start early to imitate the sounds *she* makes — not every time you respond to her, but often. We talk more about imitation in the next section of this chapter.

As well as learning to take turns with sounds, your child can learn to **take turns with actions and toys**. This area of turn-taking plays an important part in establishing the conversational pattern. It need not be seen as entirely separate from taking turns with sounds, because sounds and words can be part of any activity.

Your approach to teaching turn-taking with actions and toys will depend on your child's level of development in her Fine Motor and play skills. If your child can already perform simple actions, such as clapping, waving and banging a table, and/or can hold and manipulate toys in a deliberate way, you can start now to teach her to take turns with you in using these skills. To begin with, you will probably need to structure the game quite tightly, saying (for example) 'Mummy's turn . . . Annie's turn . . . Mummy's turn' and encouraging her to give, take, watch or whatever is appropriate to the game. Include another family member whenever possible: 'Mummy's turn . . . Peter's turn . . . Annie's turn.' Once your child is attending to, and enjoying, the game, cut down on your directions and the help that you give her. Give her opportunities to *anticipate* whose turn is coming next and to *initiate* giving or taking a turn. Involve turn-taking in a range of different daily activities, so that she does not come to associate it with particular toys or a special time of day. As your child's Fine Motor and play skills develop, keep pace with more sophisticated turn-taking games.

If your child is still at a very early stage of Fine Motor development, you can teach her to take turns at the same time as you teach her simple actions and ways of handling toys. The turns *you* take will serve as demonstrations of the skill you are aiming to teach. You can (for example) have a turn at shaking a rattle, then help your child to shake, then have another turn yourself and so on. Do not feel compelled to step in and have a turn every time your child is exploring a new action or toy; children need time to experiment by themselves. But make turn-taking a regular part of your teaching and play with your child.

Whatever stage of development your child has reached, it is important to present turn-taking as something that is fun. Don't force it on an unwilling child; look instead for activities or approaches that appeal to her. Follow her interests, introducing your own ideas gradually. Songs and action rhymes can be very helpful; look through your resource books or make up your own.

Here are some suggestions for activities which can involve turn-taking. You will think of many more yourself.

For babies and toddlers
- Knock on the door.
- 'Talk' on the phone.
- Drink from a cup (pretending is fine).
- Drop a block into a box.
- Pat the sand.
- Cover face in a peek-a-boo game.
- Brush Dolly's hair.
- Tickle Daddy.

For older children
- Draw with a crayon.
- Add a block to a tower.
- Play the piano.
- Jump off a step.
- Shovel sand into a bucket.
- Toss a pebble into the water.
- Stir the cake mix.
- Pull a funny face.

LEARNING TO IMITATE

Imitation, or copying, is vital in the child's development of language. It is through imitation that the child learns to make the sounds we use in speech and, in time, to make whole words and phrases.

Although the long-term aim is the imitation of sounds, many children find it easier to imitate facial expressions or actions. Indeed, some babies as young as four weeks old can imitate their mothers as they raise their eyebrows or move their tongues. The imitation of facial expressions and actions prepares the child to imitate sounds and then words later on.

Checklist 2.4 will help you to assess your child's imitation skills. Assess these items a few at a time, choosing times of day when your child is happy and playful. You can use puppets, dolls or favourite cuddly toys to help make the assessment into a game. Make sure that your child is *attending* before you make the sound or action that you want her to imitate. Few children will imitate at every opportunity, so if you don't get a response the first time, try again later.

You may, if you wish, make substitutions for the items shown here, but take care to duplicate the essential features of each item in your substitutions.

If your child can imitate all or most of these actions and sounds, she is ready to start learning words. We do suggest that you read the remainder of this chapter, before going on to Chapter 3, as much of the material remains relevant for children who are learning to talk.

If your child does imitate, but has yet to score on several items, use Checklist 2.4 as a guide for extending your child's imitation skills. Note that you can work on action and facial movement imitation at the same time as sound imitation. The following section on teaching imitation skills will help you.

If your child is not imitating at all, you can start teaching now, as long as your child has learned to attend to your face and voice.

Teaching Imitation Skills

Imitation is really a special kind of turn-taking. When a child is learning to take turns, it doesn't matter if she doesn't copy exactly. But as well as learning to take part in a conversational pattern, we want her to learn to make *new* sounds and actions, by copying what others do. Some children begin to imitate quite spontaneously, but many need special encouragement to copy what they

Checklist 2.4 Imitation

	Yes	*No*
Imitating actions		
Does your child imitate the following:		
Tapping the table with the hand or a spoon?		
Clapping hands?		
Waving bye-bye?		
Imitating facial movements		
Does your child imitate the following:		
Blowing a raspberry?		
Making a kissing movement with lips?		
'Sh-sh' with finger to lips?		
Moving tongue on lips?		
Imitating sounds		
Does your child imitate the following:		
Single vowel sounds — 'aah'? 'ooh'?		
Consonant + vowel patterns — 'dadada'? 'mumumum'? 'bububub'?		
Single consonant + vowel syllables — 'boo'? 'mee'?		
Two-syllable patterns — 'oo-aah'? 'pitapita'?		
Any whole word, other than 'Mum' and 'Dad'?		
A questioning intonation (here you are looking for the voice pattern, not an actual word)?		

see and hear. Here are some suggestions for how you can teach your child to imitate.

Begin by selecting sounds and actions that your child can already make. Leave the introduction of new sounds until she can imitate those she makes spontaneously — that is, until she makes these sounds or actions in response to hearing and seeing you make them.

Imitate your child. When she makes a sound or a facial movement or a deliberate action, copy what she has done. This helps to get the imitation pattern going. When you are both enjoying this game, you can introduce the sounds that you want her to make.

Jenny makes several sounds, and takes turns with pleasure, but rarely imitates. Her mother decides to teach her to imitate her favourite sound, 'dada' — a sound she often makes spontaneously but never in response to others.

Mother: (bounces Jenny on her knee)
da da da da.
Jenny: (excitedly)
eeeee eeeee.
Mother: eeeee eeeee.
Jenny: a-a-a-a-eeeee.
Mother: a-a-a-a da da da da.
Jenny: eeeee.
Mother: da da da da.
Jenny: da da.
Mother: (delighted!)
da da da da!
(gives Jenny a big hug and goes on with the game)

Make your sessions into a game that is enjoyable for you and your child. You can break up your imitation work with other activities to maintain your child's interest.

Give your child time to respond. Few children imitate instantaneously in the early stages of learning. Expect that your child will need lots of encouragement. But it's easy to get so carried away with encouraging chatter that the child has no time to respond or is so totally entertained that she feels no need to make a contribution!

Give extra help, if necessary. You will teach mainly by demonstration, but this is not always enough. You can give extra *physical help* to teach your child to imitate actions. We talk about how to give physical help in Book 2, Chapter 3. Physical help can also be used to encourage the child to produce certain sounds, but keep in mind that some children don't like having their faces touched in this way and hence the approach is not suitable for every child. Here are some techniques you can try:

- 'aah' — Hold your thumb on your child's chin and gently push down while saying 'aah'.
- 'ooh' — Push your child's cheeks forward so that her mouth makes an 'ooh' shape. Say 'ooh'.
- 'eee' — Gently push the sides of your child's mouth towards her cheeks, saying 'eee'.
- 'bububub' — Hold your thumb under your child's chin and with a finger push her lips apart and together, saying 'bububub'.
- 'mumumum' — Hold your child's hand over your nose so that she can feel the vibration this sound makes. Work on just 'mmm', holding your child's mouth closed. Later, move her lips as for 'bububub'. This is a good game to play at mealtime, as a form of 'yum yum'.

If your child does not want or need this direct physical assistance, try exaggerating your own facial movements, as Ken does here.

Ken is teaching baby Lisa to imitate 'bububub'.

Ken: Bububub. Bubububububub!
Lisa: Aah, aah.
Ken: (smiling)
Yes, aaaaah.
Now, look at Daddy!
I go bububub.
Lisa: (no response)
Ken: See my mouth?
(makes exaggerated 'b' shape with mouth)
Ba . . .
(looks expectantly)
Lisa: Bamumumum.
Ken: What a clever girl!
(continues the game)

Always reduce the help you give as your child begins to get the idea.

Pair sounds with actions. Many children, especially older children, enter more readily into imitation games when sounds are paired with actions. 'Mmmmm' can be paired with rubbing the tummy at mealtimes or pretend tea-parties. An Indian whoop is great fun where the hand is patted on the mouth to make a broken 'oo-oo-oo' sound. The items shown in Checklist 2.4 should be used as a guide for the increasing complexity of sounds to be imitated, but there is room for unlimited variation.

Pair sounds with toys. This too can be very useful with older children. Use fluffy toys or farm sets to encourage your child to imitate animal noises. At Macquarie the teachers use a fluffy worm that says 'pitapitapita' — this is accepted just as readily as a cow saying 'moo'! If your child enjoys playing with cars, try 'brmmmm' and 'tootootoot'. Again, use the checklist as a guide but experiment to see what works for *you*.

Keep presenting a sound or action for at least two weeks before giving up and trying something else. Your child may need a little while to get the idea and too much chopping and changing may make it harder for her to learn. You can work on several different goals at a time, including actions, facial movements and sounds, and you can present them in different ways, so boredom should not be a problem.

Many parents say: 'My child *never* imitates, no matter what I do.' And yet these children do make new sounds and, in time, words. Many children who do not appear to imitate during play sessions will remember the experience and practise the sounds later, in their cots or riding in the car or during private play. If your child does not appear to imitate, take time to listen to her during these practice times. You may hear that 'dadadad' you have been trying so hard for.

A Word About First Words

We talk more extensively about learning to say words in the next chapter but imitating whole words flows on so naturally from imitating sounds that some comment is needed here.

Real words will, of course, play a big part in your interaction with your child right from the beginning. The presentation of sounds should never be a substitute for actually *talking* to the child. Even if you are not expecting her to copy you, you will be encouraging her to listen and respond to your voice and teaching her the *meanings* of words that are important in her life.

Your child's first words might appear quite spontaneously or you may decide that this is the right time for her to learn to imitate whole words, and choose a set of words to emphasise to her.

When you choose the first words for your child to imitate, keep these questions in mind:

1. Does my child **need** this word? Does it relate to her interests? Will she *want* to talk about this thing?
2. Does my child **understand** what this word means?

As a general rule, choose first words (other than Mummy, Daddy and other crucial names) that relate to objects your child can actually touch and explore, and present the words as a natural extension of your play together.

Note that many children benefit from further sound imitation, even after the first words have emerged. Use Checklist 2.4 as a guide. If your child has significant gaps in her imitation skills, her ability to learn a wide range of words may be limited. Consider teaching her to make new sounds at the same time as teaching her to say more words.

LEARNING TO USE COMMUNICATION SKILLS IN EVERYDAY LIFE

It is the use we make of our communication skills that determines how much satisfaction and value we derive from them.

Even the child with a very limited range of sounds or gestures can use her simple responses to convey a range of social, practical and emotional needs. Every child who is attending to others and contributing in some way to interactions with others can be helped to use her communication skills more effectively.

Preverbal children can learn to communicate a range of needs through tone of voice or through gestures such as head-shaking, reaching towards an object or person, extending an object towards a person, pointing, smiling, handwaving and clapping. Another way is through imitating real activities (such as closing eyes to 'describe' sleep). The preverbal child can benefit immensely from learning that she can communicate many different needs and feelings through such sounds and gestures. Extending such skills at this stage will also lay the foundation for expressing needs through words, later on.

Checklist 2.5 will help you to determine the uses your child makes of her communication skills now. Base your answers on careful observation of your child, preferably over a few days. The questions are a guide only; you can substitute equivalent situations and/or responses for those listed here, taking care that your substitutions retain the essence of the communicative responses described. Note that to score 'yes' for any item, the child must show her awareness of the presence of a listener — she must be *communicating* with you.

Teaching the Uses of Communication Skills

There are two kinds of objectives that you might set for your child in this area. Your selection will depend on what you consider she needs most.

1. **You can teach your child more precise ways to meet her needs.** Your child may already express a range of needs and intentions through her sounds and gestures, and may score well on the checklist. But perhaps she tends to depend on a few very basic responses; she cries to reject, and pulls to demand, and little more. Your objective might be to teach her more specific gestures: for example, to shake her head when rejecting, and to point when demanding something. Keep in mind that all children are preverbal for quite a long time, and even the most advanced talkers rely heavily on non-verbal responses until well into their second year, or beyond. What is acceptable in a six-month-old baby may be less appropriate for a toddler. As your child learns new sounds and new ways of using her hands, help her to use them to meet needs that she previously fulfilled through simpler sounds or gestures.

When teaching your child a more specific gesture or a more appropriate sound, begin by accepting the sound or gesture she is currently using, while at the same time demonstrating the sound or gesture you want her to learn. A little later, begin to pause expectantly after your demonstration to give her a chance to copy you. Once you have seen that she can use this new skill, don't demonstrate, but wait for her to use it independently. If she reverts to her earlier method, pretend not to understand. This is far more effective than rebuking her, which could discourage her from communicating at all.

Remember that none of us are effective communicators *all* the time and prompt your child *gently* towards more sophisticated responses by *waiting expectantly* for your child to communicate and *ignoring, or pretending not to understand*, immature or inappropriate sounds or gestures.

2. **You can teach your child new uses of her communication skills.** Look at the items on the checklist to which you answered 'no'. Consider which of these uses of language she is capable of learning, given her overall level of development. Then select one or two of these uses as your first objectives.

Here are some suggestions for teaching particular ways to use language.

Demanding

Demanding and rejecting are usually the first uses that children make of their communication skills. All parents feel that their children demand! The question to ask is: Does my child demand with awareness that we are there to respond to her?

To encourage your child to demand, with awareness, from you, you must draw her attention to the ways in which you can solve her problems for her.

DEMANDING OBJECTS

Ask yourself: Does my child really *need* to demand the things she wants? Or are they always within her reach? It is very easy to anticipate a child's needs to such an extent that she rarely needs to demand.

Try arranging her favourite toys where she can see them, but cannot reach them. When she cries and strains towards a toy, step in, and say: 'You want the ball? Daddy get it.'

At snack-time, hold her food or cup out of her reach until she looks at you and gives a sound or gesture. Remember that your requirements should be very small to start with, to avoid confusion or frustration.

Gradually show her more and more specific ways to demand the objects she wants.

DEMANDING SERVICES

This means that your child asks you to do something for her. To start with, try pausing in the middle of doing something for her that she likes — for example, pushing her on a swing or bouncing her on your knee. Ask 'Want more?' and wait for her to make some sound or movement before you continue. This sound or movement might be quite accidental at first, but after a while she will learn that there is a connection between what she does and what you do.

Your child will often show you that she wants you to do something for her by becoming agitated or crying. You may know from her manner that she wants to be picked up out of her cot, but is she really telling you? To follow through the

Checklist 2.5 Your Child's Uses of Preverbal Communication Skills

	Yes	*No*
Greeting Does your child make a characteristic sound or gesture when a familiar person comes into view?		
Farewelling Does your child wave bye-bye when parting from someone?		
Sharing information When you look at a picture book with your child, does she point to or pat a picture and then look at you, wanting you to look too? When a large dog approaches you in the street, does your child look inquiringly at you, wanting reassurance?		
Giving objects Does your child hand her toast to someone else at the breakfast table, inviting them to have a bite? Does she bring to you toys or odds and ends that she finds around the house?		
Giving services Does your child brush your hair (or Dolly's hair) with a hairbrush (or a 'pretend' hairbrush)? Does your child fetch her towel while you run the bath, or give any similar services?		
Demanding objects Does your child look to you for help when she is reaching for a toy that is out of her reach? Does she look at your sandwich, then at you, and make a sound that you recognise as meaning 'I want'?		
Demanding services Does your child sit or stand beside her rocker and make noises to you until she is lifted in? Does she pull at your legs or clothing, looking up at you, until you pick her up?		
Rejecting objects Does your child push your hand away if you offer her unwanted food? Does she shake her head when offered a toy she doesn't want?		
Rejecting services When she is happily engaged in play, will she push your hands away if you go to pick her up? Does she shake her head and cling to you if you take her to bed before she is ready?		

Checklist 2.5 Your Child's Uses of Preverbal Communication Skills

	Yes	*No*
Rejecting information Does your child shake her head or protest if you call a familiar object by the wrong name? When she is having fun at the park, does she protest when you tell her it's time to go home?		
Innovating This means *playing* with sounds. When watching *Play School* on TV, does your child make a singing noise along with the music? Does she make a 'brmm-brmm' noise when pushing her toy car around the floor?		
Practising Do you hear your child practising her sounds when she is alone in her cot at nap-time? Does she chatter away to herself in her carseat on a long drive?		

crying-in-cot example, approach her cot and greet her, then pause to give her the chance to control her crying. Hold out your arms to her and say: 'You want to come UP?' Encourage her to lift her arms towards you (the tiniest gesture will do to start with) and then pick her up. This approach can be used in all sorts of situations throughout the day.

Rejecting

Almost all children make it very clear, right from the beginning, when they don't like or want something. To truly communicate their rejection, children must be aware that others can play a part in removing the things they don't want.

REJECTING OBJECTS

If your child cries or turns away when offered something she does not want, draw attention to yourself. Demonstrate a gesture that your child might learn to use, such as shaking your head. Say: 'NO block. Mummy put it away.'

REJECTING SERVICES

Make sure that you do not offer your child only those services which she must accept. It is hard to teach her to reject at nappy change time, because of course she *must* have her nappy changed. But perhaps it doesn't matter if she goes without shoes from time to time, and she has every right to object to unwanted tickling or bouncing! It is important to decide instantaneously whether you can accept her rejection or not. You do want your child to learn that she can influence your behaviour — sometimes, at least. But you *don't* want her to learn that she will eventually wear down your resolve if she whinges long enough!

REJECTING INFORMATION

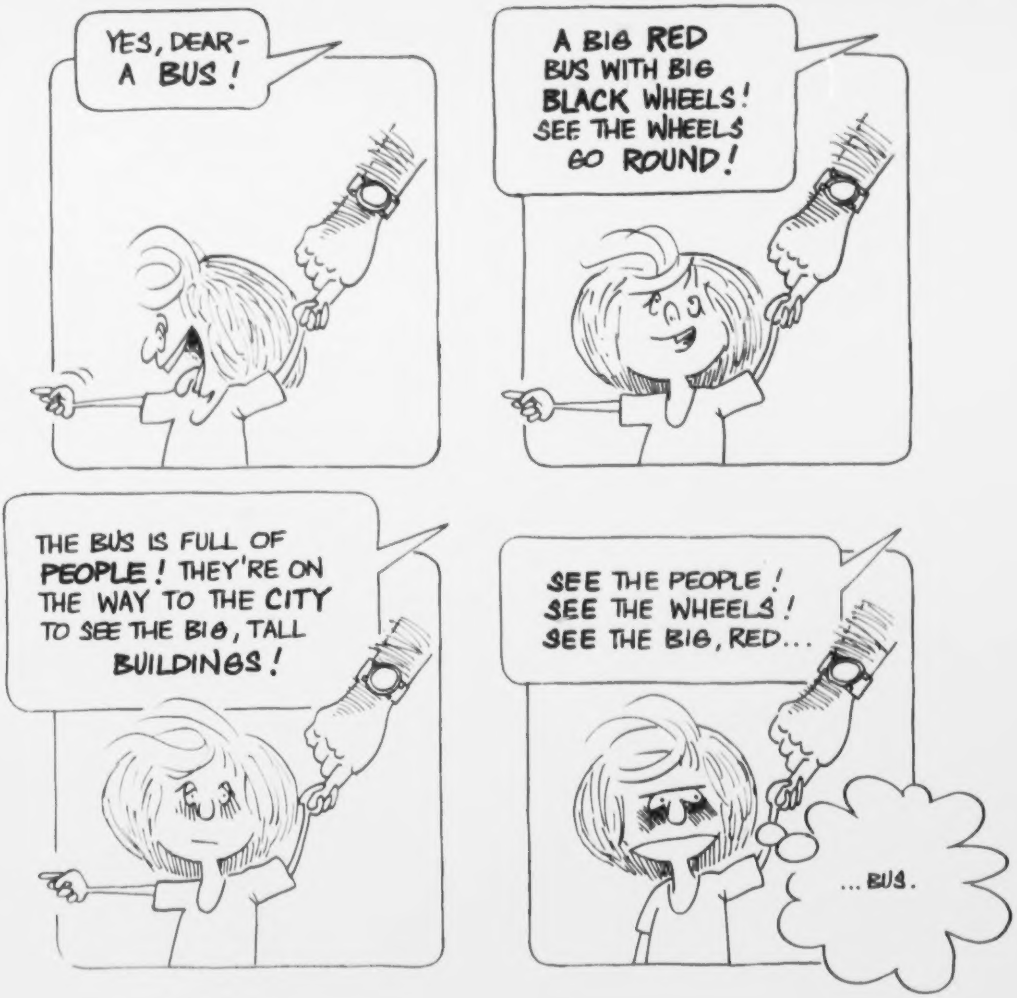
You can include this as an objective once your child is rejecting objects and services and she has demonstrated her understanding of a range of words.

Again, it is important to create opportunities for your child to reject the things you tell her. Try giving the wrong name to pictures or toys. Then, if your child does not object to your mistake, correct yourself: 'Daddy said "duck". Is this a duck? NO, it's a pussy cat!'

If, in the park, your child turns and runs on being told it's time to go home, stop her, make eye contact with her, and say: 'NO go home?' Even if you can't comply with her wishes, you can acknowledge her opinion on the matter.

Greeting and farewelling

Use the same words and gestures every time for greeting and farewelling. Take your child's hand and help her to wave, then give her an opportunity to do it by herself. Give her plenty of time to respond. Include your child in as many meet-


YES, DEAR - A BUS!
A BIG RED BUS WITH BIG BLACK WHEELS! SEE THE WHEELS GO ROUND!
THE BUS IS FULL OF PEOPLE! THEY'RE ON THE WAY TO THE CITY TO SEE THE BIG, TALL BUILDINGS!
SEE THE PEOPLE! SEE THE WHEELS! SEE THE BIG, RED...
... BUS.

ings and partings as you can, particularly when they involve other members of the family with whom she has a strong rapport.

Sharing information
Use every opportunity to point things out for your child, and name them for her. Follow her gaze to see what is interesting her, so that you can focus on things together. Encourage her to follow your hand when you point, starting with objects that are only just out of reach. As your child starts to reach out towards objects, tell her their names. When she is pointing confidently, give her the chance to name them, if only by a simple sound. Asking questions such as 'What's that?' or 'What's happening?' not only gives the child the chance to *tell* you something, but also demonstrates the way to *ask* for information — an important aspect of sharing.

Giving

Giving, even silent giving, is an intensely communicative act. Parents are invariably moved the first time their child spontaneously gives something to them. It is an event to be ranked with that first precious smile.

GIVING OBJECTS

This requires considerable physical dexterity; the Fine Motor Sequences will show you if your child is ready to learn this skill.

First, teach your child to give in response to a request. To help her to give spontaneously, set up games with other family members where objects are passed from person to person. Or line up dolls and teddies and take turns with your child to give a spoon and a cup to each one.

GIVING SERVICES

Role-play or imaginative games can be useful for teaching your child to do things for others. Set up turn-taking games in which you feed Teddy, then your child feeds Teddy; you brush Daddy's hair and then your child has a turn. Help her physically if necessary but reduce your help as she gets the idea. Give her the props you have used in these games to play with on her own, and watch for signs that she is using them spontaneously.

Innovating

Demonstrate to your child that sounds can be used as a part of play. Sing along with the nursery rhymes on *Play School* or on the record player. Use rhymes and songs as you push your child on the swing or wash her in the bath. Show her the noises that are associated with various toys — 'brmm brmm' for cars, 'zoommmm' for planes, and so on. Use sounds that you think your child might be able to copy, and involve sounds that your child enjoys making in your play.

Practising

As this is a private matter it is not easy to structure things so that your child will practise. When your child does practise in the privacy of her cot or play corner, stop and think before interrupting her. Use the opportunity to observe the kinds of sounds that your child is enjoying at the moment. Wait until she pauses before drawing attention to yourself, or join in softly as you go to pick her up.

SUMMING UP

There are five crucial areas in the development of language skills in the child who is not yet talking:

- Learning to attend and respond to others
- Learning to play
- Learning to take turns
- Learning to imitate
- Learning to use communication skills in everyday life.

Basic attending skills must be taught first. Once your child is attending to you, you will be able to extend your child in two or more areas of language development at the same time.

Once you have completed the checklists, and chosen your objectives, a few simple techniques will help you to work towards these objectives as part of your normal play and interaction with your child.

Here again are the approaches or techniques which are most important in teaching language skills to the preverbal child:

- Give your child time to respond.
- Listen . . . wait expectantly.
- Make your child's interests your starting point for teaching.
- Take turns with your child, with actions, facial movements and sounds.
- Imitate your child and encourage her to imitate you.
- Avoid anticipating everything your child needs. Help her to recognise her need to communicate.
- Show her the value and usefulness of communicating with you — both the practical and the emotional value.
- Use the same words for the same actions and objects, to help your child learn to anticipate events, understand meanings and, in time, say the words.

We've addressed ourselves mainly to parents in this chapter, but brothers and sisters, grandparents and special friends can also achieve marvellous results. Communication should be an important part of *all* your child's relationships, and the people she loves can teach her much about the joy she can give, and the satisfaction she can receive, through communicating with others.

CHAPTER 3

Teaching Language to the Verbal Child

The verbal child is the child who is talking. Perhaps your child has just started to talk or you feel he is ready to begin using words. Or perhaps your child already uses a range of words and/or phrases and you want to help him to make the most of his verbal ability. Either way, this chapter will give you some goals to aim for, the means to assess your child and plan his language program and some techniques which will help him to learn.

Here are some of the most important goals for the verbal child:

- The child will use and understand more words and phrases.
- The child will use his language in a wider range of situations, to express all his social, emotional and physical needs and he will extend his ability to take turns in conversation.
- The child will express a greater range of meanings through his words and phrases. He will not only be able to name things, but will talk about what they do, what they are like, who owns them and so on.
- The child will use correct grammar, as appropriate to his level of language development.
- The child will extend his articulation skills, or pronunciation of words, as appropriate to his age and level of development.

We will be concerned in this chapter with three broad levels of language development:

- The *single-word level*, for the child who is not yet combining words into phrases
- The *two-word level*, for the child who is learning to put two words together
- The *three-word level*, for the child who is using phrases of three words or more.

In the area of the child's uses of language, we simplify these levels into just two stages: single words and phrases.

The basic principles of assessing, setting objectives and teaching language are the same, whatever level the child has reached. Within each section of this chapter, we will present the basic principles first and then give information that is specific to particular levels of ability.

Note that the boundaries between the different levels are never clear. Children continue to use single words and two-word phrases even once three-word phrases are well established. When you think about it, we all use single words and simple phrases, many times a day! And as we said in the previous chapter, *preverbal* language skills continue to be important even when talking is well under way. While your main goal will be to extend your child's language at the most advanced level that he's capable of using, he may benefit from a strengthening of his language skills at earlier levels as well.

This chapter has three main sections: how to assess, deciding what to teach, and how to teach. You will also find all the checklists at the end of the chapter. You may wish to photocopy them, before you use them. A summary of these checklists is found in Book 8.

HOW TO ASSESS

In language, as in every other skill area, you will need a detailed picture of what your child can do *now*, before you begin teaching.

Even if your child has only a few words, which he says over and over again, it is worth looking closely at *how* he uses these words and what kinds of meanings they express.

If your child has only just started to talk and/or still communicates largely through sounds or gestures, follow the assessment procedures described in Chapter 2, as well as those below.

The Language Sample

This is the most important technique for language assessment in the *T.E.L.L.* program. Broadly speaking, this means writing down everything your child says!

Your language sample will show you not only what your child can say, but also the purposes that lie behind his words. And, just as importantly, it will give you insight into his conversational skills — his ability to take turns, listen, respond appropriately and initiate new topics of conversation.

Here is how to take a language sample.

1. Set aside a day when you plan to write down everything your child says.
2. Go about your normal daily activities, being sure to include some situations which you know your child will enjoy and want to talk about.
3. Carry with you a notebook and pencil.
4. Divide each page of your notebook into three columns. In the right column, write down everything your child says. In the left column, write down anything you had said just before your child spoke. In the centre column, write a brief description of the situation at the time.
5. If your child has repeated exactly something you have just said, mark it with an 'I' for 'Imitated'.
6. If your child uses few words, include his communicative sounds or gestures in your sample. Perhaps he points at things he wants or shakes his head to indicate 'no'. Write these gestures down.
7. By all means encourage your child to talk, but don't give him too many directions. You want to know what he will do spontaneously in the course of a fairly normal day. Just chat with him in the way that you usually do.
8. You will find that your child's conversations with others are easier for you to record. Take advantage of the presence of a third person, either by observing and recording, or by asking this person to take over as the scribe for a while.
9. Plan to spend the evening analysing your language sample, while the events of the day are still fresh in your mind. You will doubtless resort to abbreviations and odd hieroglyphics as you hurry to write things down and a prompt analysis will minimise confusion!

You will find an example of a language sample in Box 3.1. You may well want to use more abbreviations in your sample.

When you have finished collecting your language sample you can use it to answer three important questions:

- *Why* does my child talk?
- *What* does my child talk *about*?
- What *grammatical forms* does my child use?

Why Does My Child Talk?

Before looking at the subject matter of your child's words and/or phrases, consider the *purposes* for which he *uses* his language skills.

When we speak, we use words to pass on information, to ask for things, to reject what we don't want, to offer things to others and to fulfil a range of other practical and social needs.

If a child cannot use his language skills to fulfil his needs, the most extensive vocabulary in the world will be of little use to him. On a more positive note, if you can help your child to see the practical and emotional value of communicating with others, and can teach him a variety of ways to use his words, he will be able to make the fullest possible use of the vocabulary he has and he will have a sound basis for developing further.

Conversational skills

Closely related to the uses your child makes of the words he can say is his ability to take part in a conversation.

In Chapter 2 we talk about *turn-taking* as the basis for conversational skills. The child who is talking must learn to *take turns with words*. He must be able to *initiate* a conversation and he must be able to *follow up* or respond appropriately to what other people say.

How to analyse your child's uses of language

To analyse your child's uses of language, and his conversational skills, you will use your language sample and Checklist 3.1: Your Child's Uses of Language: Single Words (see the end of this chapter) *and/or* Checklist 3.2: Your Child's Uses of Language: Phrases. If your child is still using many preverbal communicative skills, you will also use Checklist 2.5: Your Child's Uses of Preverbal Communication Skills.

Work through your language sample, considering one gesture, word or phrase at a time. From now on, we will refer to gestures, words and phrases collectively as *utterances*.

Decide which checklist is appropriate to each utterance. Gestures and sounds should be recorded on Checklist 2.5. Single-word utterances should be recorded on Checklist 3.1. Phrases should be recorded on Checklist 3.2.

Turn to the relevant checklist and then decide to which category the utterance belongs. The questions, notes and examples in each box will help you to decide on the correct category.

When you have located the correct category, place a tick for that utterance under 'yes' (for

Box 3.1 Peter's Language Sample

What Mummy said	*Context*	*What Peter said*
Wakey-wakey	Cot, morning	Up
Up you get.		Dolly up
You want Dolly?		Up
Nappy time.	Changing nappy	No No
Lie still.		No
Ooh, look what Daddy's made.	Kitchen	Toast
Mmm, yummy toast.	D. offers toast	Yum yum
What will you have now?	M. offers juice	Doos (juice)
Want more juice?	P. pushes juice away	Up
You finished breaky?		Up
Shoes on.	Getting dressed	Shoe
Nice brown shoes.		Shoe
Daddy's going.	At door, D. going out	Bye-bye
Daddy's gone.	Says this all the way back down the hall	Bye-bye
. . . Andy to bus.	M. getting keys	Car
	All the way in car	Brm-brm
Bye Andy.		
A. says 'See ya, Pete'.	At bus stop	Bye-bye
Just wait, Peter.	M. on phone	Up
What's Teddy doing?	M. jumps Teddy	Jump
Look, Teddy's hungry.	M. feeds Teddy	No
	P. jumps Teddy	Jump Teddy
Where's Teddy gone?	Hiding Teddy under chair	Chair
Where's Teddy?		Teddy (I)
Where is he now?	Teddy on piano	Up

Checklist 2.5) or in the first of the three columns in Checklists 3.1 and 3.2.

For words and phrases, you must now decide whether your child used that utterance to *initiate* or to *follow up*. If your child has used the utterance to start a new conversation or to change the subject within a conversation, he has initiated. If he has responded to something said to him, he has followed up. Place a tick in the relevant column. Some examples are shown in Box 3.2, to help you decide.

Once you have worked through every utterance in your language sample in this way, you will be able to use your checklists to decide on objectives for your child. We will show you how later in this chapter.

What Does a Child Talk About?

The second major question which your language sample will help you to answer concerns the *content* of your child's language or the *meanings* he can express. Of course you want your child to be able to say lots of words but it is just as important that he learns to use lots of different *kinds* of words. Here are vocabularies of two children:

'Bill's' vocabulary:

car
ball
apple
lolly
puppy
cow
bike
juice
keys
toasts
baby
book
cup
spoon
no
Teddy
egg
bird
TV
Nana
bottle
hi
bye-bye
bickie

Box 3.2 Initiating and Following Up

Initiating: Sam approaches his mother while she is washing up.
Sam tugs her skirt and says ‘drink’.

Paula and her father are looking quietly at a book.
Paula points to a picture and says ‘apple’.

Joey and his grandfather are playing with toys.
Grandfather: Look, Joey, my car goes fast.
Joey (following up): Brmmm.
Grandfather: My car goes under the bridge.
Joey (following up): Car there.
Grandfather: Now my car goes over the bridge.
Joey (initiating): Want outside now.

Following up: Kate and her father are in the kitchen.
Father: What do you want, Kate?
Kate: Want juice.

George and his brother are playing on the swing.
Brother: Come on, George, it’s my turn.
George: No!

Grandma is going home after a visit to Lee’s house.
Grandma: Bye, Lee, see you on Sunday.
Lee: Bye-bye.

‘Ben’s’ vocabulary:
apple
juice
Davie
Dolly
book
jump
ball
TV
no
dinner
bye
gone
eat
block
sleep
hi
up
spoon
banana
wash
gee-gee
sleep
car
Teddy

Bill and Ben both have the same number of words, but Ben has a greater variety of different kinds of words. Bill can say ‘hi’ and ‘bye-bye’ and ‘no’, but beyond this he can only say the names of things. Ben can also talk about what things are doing (jump, eat, wash, sleep) and is beginning to talk about where things are (up) and what has happened to them (gone). If Bill and Ben continue their current patterns as they learn new words, then Ben will have a decided advantage when it comes to putting words together into phrases. There are many more possibilities for two-word combinations in Ben’s vocabulary than there are in Bill’s.

Bill has certainly made a very good start and his parents have every right to be pleased about all the words he can say. They will be able to help him further, now, by teaching him a range of different **kinds** of words as well as more naming words.

The ability to express a wide range of meanings is just as important to the child who is using phrases. Here are two more lists to compare:

List One	*List Two*
Dolly sit	Teddy sit
Teddy jump	eat banana
Mummy sleep	hot sausage
push car	Daddy gone
Penny eat	no sleep
eat sausage	more jumping
car go	Dolly there
Dolly fall	nappy wet
Teddy push	this book
wash Mummy	Mummy’s shoe

You can see that the phrases in List Two cover a wider variety of meanings than those in List One, all of which pair names and actions. It's not that any one kind of phrase is better than any other — it's that a child needs *all* kinds of phrases in order to be able to talk about all the different things that happen in his life.

How to analyse the kinds of meanings your child can express

To analyse the kinds of meanings your child can express, you will need your language sample *and* Checklist 3.3: The Meanings Your Child Can Express: Single Words *and/or* Checklist 3.4: The Meanings Your Child Can Express: Two-Word Phrases *and/or* Checklist 3.5: The Meanings Your Child Can Express: Three-Word Phrases.

Work through your language sample, considering one utterance (word or phrase) at a time. Do not include words or phrases which have been directly imitated.

Decide which checklist is appropriate to each utterance. This will usually be obvious from the number of words in the utterance. If a phrase contains more than three words, include it in the three-word checklist. Note that children sometimes use two-word combinations that are really equivalent in meaning to a single word: tea-party, all-gone, rocking horse, Teddy bear and cup-of-tea are frequently used as single entities and should be included in the single-word checklist.

Now turn to the relevant checklist. Use the questions and examples in each box to decide to which category each utterance belongs. Always look at the way in which your child is using the utterance, rather than its dictionary definition. If your child says 'Mummy sock' for example, he could mean 'Mummy's sock' or 'Mummy, put on my sock'. The context recorded in your language sample will show you what your child has meant.

Sometimes a phrase can belong to more than one category. For example, the phrase 'Mummy's book here' could belong to both the possession and the location categories. In such a case, record the phrase twice.

On the two-word and three-word checklists, we suggest that each phrase recorded under any category should include a different key word. For example, if your child's language sample included

more juice
more apple
more banana

you would record only one example. Again, if he has said

Polly eat
Teddy eat
Mummy eat

only one of these phrases would be entered. We advise this procedure to ensure that the child acquires a *variety* of phrases of each type and uses a wide vocabulary in his phrases.

When you have worked through all the utterances in your language sample, add up the number of words or phrases in each box and compare your totals to the suggested minimum number of words to aim for, in the right column of each checklist. This comparison, and the notes in each box, will help you to make decisions about what to teach first. We will talk further about setting objectives later in this chapter.

What Grammatical Forms Does a Child Use?

Correct grammar is less crucial to effective communication than the areas we have looked at so far. But it is important if your child is to sound like everybody else does and grammatical forms provide an efficient way of expressing fine shades of meaning.

Using your language sample and Checklist 3.6: Grammatical Features, tick off all the grammatical words and forms that your child has used.

DECIDING WHAT TO TEACH

Once you have completed your language sample and worked through the checklists, you will be ready to select *objectives* for your child's language program.

You will have at least two different kinds of objectives in the expressive language area — objectives that relate to your child's **uses** of language and the **meanings** he can express — and possibly *grammatical* objectives. As you will see later, these different areas of language can be taught together and, to a large extent, as part of your normal daily activities.

Your Child's Uses of Language

Your general goals in this area are:

- To increase the *range* of ways in which your child uses his language skills
- To ensure that your child has the necessary conversational skills of *initiating* and *following up*
- To encourage your child to meet all his needs using the *highest level* of expression of which he

is capable — whether that is single words, two-word phrases or phrases of three words or more.

Here are some guidelines for setting objectives to extend your child's uses of language.

1. Look first at the first of the three columns on your checklists. Note the way in which the ticks are distributed. Ideally you would see several ticks in each box, but few children, disabled or otherwise, would show such an even pattern.

2. If your child uses mostly single words, concentrate on the single-word checklist. If your child uses mostly phrases, concentrate on the phrases checklist.

3. Choose objectives from the empty or near-empty boxes.

4. Choose only one or two objectives at a time. Many parents find that once they are aware of this aspect of their child's language, they instinctively work towards encouraging him to communicate in all kinds of ways, from the beginning. This is fine, but do select one or two objectives for special concentration. This will make it easier for you to see progress and your child may become confused if your expectations increase too dramatically all at once.

5. Check that your objectives in the area of *uses* are compatible with your objectives in the area of *meanings*. For instance, don't start teaching him to use words to reject, unless he has learned, or is ready to learn, to say 'no'. You will find few cases in which objectives in the two areas are incompatible.

6. Specify in your objectives the number of words you want your child to use (single words, two-word phrases or three-word phrases).

7. Look at the second and third columns in your checklists, where you indicated whether your child was *initiating* or *following up*. Look at your child's pattern across all categories. Righting any imbalance between initiating and following up in conversation should have a high priority in your objectives.

Here are examples of pragmatic objectives:

- Demands services, single words
- Initiates giving information, single words
- Rejects objects and services, using two-word phrases
- Requests information, using three-word phrases
- Follows up in conversation, using two-word or three-word phrases.

Later in this chapter, we will suggest ways to teach your child new ways to use his language skills.

The Meanings Your Child Can Express

Your general goals in this area are:

- To increase the *range* of different kinds of meanings your child can express
- To increase the *number* of words or phrases that your child can say
- To extend your child's language skills through the different stages of verbal ability — from preverbal to single-word usage, from single words to two-word phrases, and then from two-word phrases to phrases of three words and more.

The way to go about setting objectives differs a little according to your child's current level, so we'll look at each level separately.

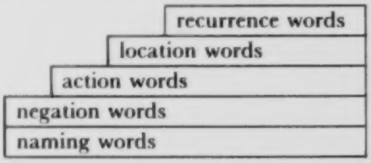
Setting objectives at the single-word level

At this level, you will select four or five specific words that you want your child to learn to use. As your child learns these words, you will replace them with more. But which words?

Think first about the kinds of words you want your child to learn. Look again at the categories described on the single-word checklist (3.3). You want your child to learn to use all these different kinds of words, but where should you start?

The checklists show the approximate order in which new kinds of words should be introduced, but we do *not* suggest that you teach your child the full quota of words in one category before going on to the next. Picture the different kinds of words (or categories) as a series of steps, as in the diagram.

The Single-Word Pattern of Acquisition



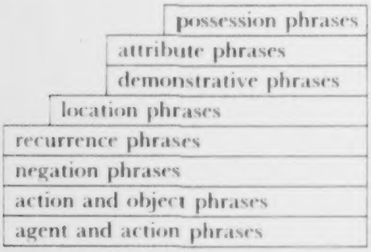
Typically, the acquisition of words begins in the bottom left corner of this series of steps. The child begins by learning a few naming words and the first negation word, 'no'. Then, as well as learning more naming and negation words, he begins to use action words as well. A little later he starts to use some location words, all the while extending his use of the first three categories. Finally, recurrence words are introduced. By the time he reaches the top of our steps, the child has learned a variety of words within all five categories.

In reality few children follow this pattern exactly. Don't be concerned if your child's pattern is quite different. But the step graph does provide a useful guide for setting new objectives. If your child is already using a range of single words, think in terms of filling in any gaps as well as extending his use of words across and up the graph. If your child is just beginning to talk, start at the bottom left with a few naming words and 'no' and gradually introduce more *kinds* of words as well as increasing the number of words within each category.

Once you have decided what kinds of words to teach, the question remains of which specific words to choose. You would choose words that your child *understands* and *needs*, choose words that your child will *want* to use — words for objects he likes, actions he enjoys — words which can become part of his everyday life. In the early stages, especially, choose words for objects or actions that he can experience in a very direct way — words for close, touchable objects rather than distant ones, actions he can make himself rather than actions he must be shown, and so on. Be guided by your child's interests and you can't go far wrong!

Setting objectives at the two-word level
At the two-word level, the pattern of acquisition looks like the diagram.

The Two-Word Pattern of Acquisition



As with the single-word level, our hypothetical 'typical' child begins at the bottom left corner, pairing words he knows into simple phrases combining an action with an agent (e.g. Mummy sit) or an object (e.g. Sit Dolly). At much the same time he starts to use negation phrases (e.g. No milk) and recurrence phrases (e.g. More pie). A little later he masters location phrases (e.g. Kitty up), at the same time extending the number of combinations he can make in the first three categories. And so he progresses, across the categories and within each category, until he has mastered all these kinds of phrases and is ready to progress to the three-word level.

This graph together with your two-word checklist (3.4) will show you where teaching should begin.

When your child is just starting to put two words together, or is just starting on a new kind of phrase, it is helpful to state exactly the phrases you aim for him to learn. Choose words that he uses freely at the single-word level and combine them into phrases describing situations he will enjoy. For example, you might start by teaching the *agent + action* phrase 'Dolly jump' and the negation phrase 'No milk'.

Once he has mastered these, you could introduce more examples using the same key words, as shown here:

agent + action	*negation*
Dolly jump	No milk
Teddy jump	No sauce
Mummy jump	No bath
Doggie jump	No Vegemite
Peter jump	No carrot

The next step would be to introduce a greater variety of *agent + action* and *negation* phrases, as shown here:

agent + action	*negation*
Dolly sleep	No more
Teddy sleep	No sleep
Mummy wash	No jump
Dolly wash	Teddy gone
Peter eat	Dolly gone

The number and variety of these *agent + action* and *negation* phrases could be gradually increased, at the same time as another kind of phrase is introduced; for example, *action + object*.

Once a child is using a range of two-word phrases, it is no longer necessary to specify in your objectives exactly which you want your child to use. You can simply state the category and use the examples that come to hand. If, for example, your objective was the category *attribute* phrases, you could have opportunities in the course of your day to talk about such things as big spoons, little spoons, red socks, pretty flowers, fast running and so on.

In summary, the procedure is this:

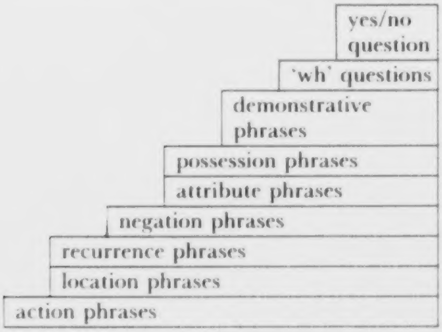
- When your child is first learning to put two words together, or is just starting to use a new category, specify both words of the phrases you want him to learn.

- When he is getting the idea of making this kind of phrase, specify just the key word and use lots of examples of phrases using this word.
- When your child is adept at making two-word phrases, you can specify just the category or kind of phrase you are aiming for, such as recurrence phrases or attribute phrases and use all the examples which come your way.

Setting objectives at the three-word level

The diagram shows the pattern of acquisition at the three-word level.

The Three-Word Pattern of Acquisition



The 'typical' child progresses from the bottom left corner up and across, as at the single-word and two-word levels.

Because the child can now freely combine words into two-word phrases and is used to the idea of putting words together, it is usually unnecessary to choose specific words for your objectives. Your objectives can simply state the category or kind of phrase you are aiming for and you can use all kinds of examples according to what happens during the day. Your objectives might look something like this:

- Three-word *attribute* phrases
- Three-word *possession* phrases.

If, however, your child is having difficulty or you find this approach too open-ended, by all means specify at least the key words you are aiming for. Your objectives might then look something like this:

- Three-word *recurrence* phrases: 'Want *more* . . .'
- Three-word *'wh' questions:* 'Where's . . . gone?'

Setting Grammatical Objectives

The grammatical features checklist (3.6) gives a guide to the stage of language development at which each grammatical feature usually appears.

Teach each skill when your child has reached that stage of language development and when a particular grammatical feature is compatible with your objectives in the area of *meanings*.

For example, if your child is well advanced at the two-word level *and* is working on the category of *possession* phrases, you could teach the *possessive 's'*. If your child is about halfway through the three-word level and is working on the category of *negation* phrases, you could teach the contraction *'n't'*.

There is no need to set aside extra time to teach grammatical features; simply introduce them as part of your child's more general language goals when he is ready and when they will conveniently fit in.

Many of us feel overwhelmed — and turned off — by all the technicalities of correct grammar. How comprehensible you find the terms in the grammatical features checklist will depend on what was in fashion when you were at school. Some of us had these terms drummed into us, while others will never have heard them before. If you are in the latter category, go by the examples in the checklist, rather than the terms, and be assured that teaching correct grammar is essentially a matter of *expecting* more mature-sounding language from your child, little by little, as his language skills develop.

Some Questions and Answers About Deciding What to Teach

> My child is starting to put words together into two-word phrases, but there are still lots of gaps in her single-word checklist. Do I still need to work at the single-word level?

Yes. In order to make a wide variety of phrases, your child will need a wide variety of single words. You can work at both levels at the same time, teaching her to make new phrases with words she already knows, while increasing her single-word vocabulary.

> My child has picked up a lot of 'baby talk'. Can these words go on her checklist? And should I teach her the proper words now?

As long as she uses these words consistently and they convey a clear meaning to you, they can go on her checklist. Be cautious about including 'prattle'; sometimes children enjoy copying the sound of talking without meaning anything at all.

The form you use when you teach new words (biscuit or bickie, thank you or ta, dog or doggie) should be the same as the form generally used in your household. If you are unsure, choose the correct form, but obviously there is no sense in teaching your child to say 'sheep' if everyone else says 'baa-lamb'!

If you want to teach the correct form for baby words your child already uses, do it tactfully. Don't tell her she's said the wrong thing, but use the mature form in your reply. For instance, if your child says 'birdie', you could say 'Yes, it's a bird'.

> I'm stuck about what new words to teach my child. He will ask for the things he wants (mostly food) but it's hard to interest him in new *things*, let alone action or location words.

First of all, recognise that broadening his interests is an important part of the continuum of language teaching. Time spent on teaching new play skills is *not* a deviation from teaching language, but part of the same process. To communicate, he must have things to communicate about.

Secondly, look closely at the things your child is now interested in and look for ways you could introduce new words that relate to them. For example, teach him to ask for his spoon as well as his food. Teach him to ask to be lifted up into his highchair. If he is interested in food, he may enjoy cooking games, which can involve a lot of action words (such as stir, cut, roll, pour). He may also enjoy other tactile play materials, such as dough, sand and water, which will suggest many new words.

Your child needs to learn that language has many other functions besides demanding objects. Initially he may find it easier to explore these other functions with gestures, rather than words, so look for ideas in Chapter 2 as well as the notes on teaching the uses of language later in this chapter.

> The things my child can say don't follow at all the pattern suggested by your checklists and graphs. How do I set objectives?

You will need to find a balance between extending the skills your child already has, and filling in the gaps. Use the checklists and graphs as a guide to the order for introducing new skills.

Few children do follow exactly the pattern we have suggested. It is intended only as a guide. If your child's interests take him off on a tangent, that's fine!

HOW TO TEACH LANGUAGE SKILLS

Language learning can happen anywhere and everywhere. Parents are in a unique position when it comes to the teaching of language because they share with their child an infinite range of situations and activities and because they are the people to whom the child most *wants* to talk.

Setting the Scene

Most parents find it helpful to set aside a brief time each day (perhaps a quarter of an hour) when they concentrate on nothing but language. Special games or activities can be planned for these sessions and it is easier to keep track of progress when there are no other distractions to contend with. Other family members can be included in these sessions and can provide excellent models for your handicapped child. Try to avoid having all these sessions in the one special place; rather, make use of all the different facilities your home or neighbourhood offers.

Whether you plan special sessions or not, most of your teaching will take place in normal everyday around-the-house and play activities. All the teaching techniques we present below can be used equally well in special teaching sessions and as part of your general interaction with your child.

Playing Your Part

Many of our suggestions will seem a matter of commonsense. This is because they reflect the things that parents do naturally. As we have said elsewhere, language theorists have learned a great deal about what teachers should do from watching parents talking to their children.

While we may not suggest any strange new techniques, it *is* important to spend time mentally standing back and observing yourself to make sure that the things we describe below really *are* happening. You may need to be more deliberate, consistent and precise in using these techniques than you were when you helped your other children learn to talk.

1. **Talk to your child about what he is doing,** by describing his actions and the materials he is using.

2. **Tell him the appropriate words and phrases,** clearly and simply, with special emphasis on the objectives you have set for him.

3. **Take turns,** both verbally and non-verbally, with your child. Don't do all the talking for him. Even if he has no words at all, his sounds and gestures should be accepted as his turn in the conversation.

4. **Expect your child to make a response,** and wait until he does so. If you find it hard to wait, train yourself by counting slowly to five in your head. Don't step in until it's clear that no response is coming.

5. **Use your child's own sounds, gestures and words as a starting point** in your teaching sessions, gradually introducing the words or phrases you want to teach.

6. **Follow your child's interests** as much as possible. Children talk only about things they want to talk about. If the exciting activity you planned is ignored or rejected, swallow your disappointment, put it aside to try another day and join in the game he has chosen.

7. **Respond conversationally** to your child's gestures, sounds, words and phrases. Saying 'good boy' or 'good talking' will teach him nothing about normal conversation. He will feel just as pleased, and encouraged, if you respond naturally to what he has said, like this:

Child:	There.
Parent:	Oh, Teddy's there.
Child:	Fish.
Parent:	Yes, the fish is swimming.
Child:	Want sandwich.
Parent:	I'll get a Vegemite sandwich.
Child:	Big dog coming.
Parent:	Yes, it's a big spotted dog!

Choosing Materials

In your round-the-house teaching, look for opportunities to involve your child's objectives in whatever you are doing. Some words crop up everywhere and you won't have to give a second thought to materials. For others, more planning will be needed. If your objective is 'ball', for example, you might put a ball among the bath toys and another outside near the clothes line and perhaps a soft one in the cot. If your objective is 'Teddy', you may need to carry the favoured bear around with you for a few days, letting him join in at mealtimes and listen to the bedtime story.

Your special sessions will give you the opportunity to plan for variety. It is important that your child learns that 'cup' is not only a red thing with two handles, and that the phrase 'Dolly in' can be applied when Dolly is in the bath, a box, a biscuit tin, a bucket and the doll's house!

Try having a box into which you put all sorts of things that might come in handy in teaching your current objectives, changing them as your objectives change.

So far we have looked at the role of the language teacher in fairly general terms. We will look now at some more specific techniques, first for teaching *uses* of language and then for teaching *words and phrases*.

TEACHING THE USES OF LANGUAGE

We will look separately at each of the three general goals suggested on page 3–28.

Increasing the Range of Uses

We will concentrate here on teaching new ways of using single words. We discuss the transition to phrases below.

If your child is not using his language skills in all the ways described in the single-word checklist (3.1) you will have selected one or more new uses as your objectives.

First, check whether your child uses preverbal communication skills (such as sounds or gestures) in place of words you would like him to use. Checklist 2.5 will help you to identify what he is doing. If he is not using his communication skills for a particular purpose, either verbally or nonverbally, start by teaching him an appropriate *gesture* as well as the relevant words. If, for example, he does not farewell people either with words or with gestures, encourage him to wave as well as emphasising 'bye-bye'. He may find the gesture easier to learn than the word, and once he uses a gesture a word can be added to it and, in time, replace it.

Once your child can use his preverbal communication skills for a particular purpose, you can teach him to use words instead in the following stages.

1. **Accept your child's gestures and tell him the words as well.** Let's say your objective is that your child uses single words to demand objects. If he points to demand an object, get it for him,

while at the same time saying the name of the object.

2. **Give him the opportunity to imitate the words.** After you have told him the word you would like him to use, pause and look expectantly at him, waiting for him to imitate the word. In the case of requesting, you can turn down your child's request unless he imitates you, provided it's a word you know he can say. But in general, avoid letting the *way* in which your child communicates with you become more important than the fact that he *is* communicating. Project to him a positive expectation that he *can* respond, rather than disappointment or frustration when he doesn't.

3. **Give him the opportunity to use words spontaneously.** Once you are very sure that he can say the word, you can stop demonstrating it to him. If he uses a gesture instead of a word, ignore the gesture, pretend not to understand or look questioningly at him. Only give a hint as to what you are waiting for after he's had a chance to think of it for himself.

As long as you have your objectives clearly in mind, you will find countless ways to encourage your child to use his language skills in new ways and for new purposes. In the classroom at Macquarie, the teachers have found it helpful to put each child's language objectives up on the wall. You might find it helpful to put them on the fridge door or on the family noticeboard. A simple sign such as 'Johnny can ask for the things he wants' can make such a difference!

Teaching Conversational Skills

If your child's language sample showed a significant imbalance between *initiating* and *following up* in conversation, then righting this imbalance will be one of your objectives. The following points may help you.

The child who rarely initiates

Make sure there are enough silences between you to give your child the opportunity to initiate conversations. If your household is always full of chatter (pleasant though this may be) he may rarely feel the need to initiate.

When you come across a new situation or toy together, look expectantly at him and wait for him to make the first comment.

Help him to initiate with other people by giving him messages to take or objects to show. You may have to prompt him all the way at first, but stay in the background as much as possible. It is up to the person who receives the message to make him feel that his initiative is welcome.

With an older child who hangs back out of shyness, puppets and role-play games can be very helpful. The 'disguise' can put a safe, protective barrier between the shy child and the person he would like to talk to. He can pretend: 'It's not really me talking, it's Cookie Monster!'

The child who rarely follows up

Typically, this is an active, excitable child who will rush up to his companions, make an announcement and then rush off again without waiting for a reply. If your child is like this, you will need to take your lead from his interests, play his games with him and gradually adapt them into turn-taking games where *your* turn, and *your* comments, play an integral part. You can also try changing his daily routine so that his quietest times are reserved for language activities, but avoid giving him the impression that these are the only times when listening is required.

Some children use their language skills only to demand toys or food, and only follow up to the question 'What do you want?' Such children benefit from time spent in broadening their interests and play skills, so that they learn that talking, and interacting in general, can have rewarding consequences other than getting the things they want. Here, too, it is important to start with the child's current interests. If eating is his favourite occupation, take turns with him at mealtimes, let him share with you in food preparation and play pretending games which involve 'eating' — such as dollies' tea-parties. Once he sees that he can have his food, and have fun with you as well, you will be able to show him new ways of having fun that don't involve eating, and there will be many more things for the two of you to talk about. As your child becomes more interested in your contributions to his activities, he will begin to listen more and to respond to what you say.

Helping Your Child to Use His Full Language Ability

Once your child is learning to put two words together into phrases, you can help him to use this new level of language ability to meet all the needs that he previously met through single words.

Where he once used a single word (such as 'juice') to demand something he wanted, he can now learn to use two words ('Want juice'). Where he used a single word ('no') to reject something he didn't like, he can now use a phrase ('No bath'). He can learn to say 'Bye-bye Daddy' instead of 'bye-bye' when he farewells, and 'Open door' instead of 'door' when he wants something done for him.

The steps for teaching are much the same as those used to teach new uses of single words (see pages 3–33 and 3–34):

1. Accept a single word, while demonstrating a phrase as well.
2. Give him the opportunity to imitate the phrase.
3. Give him the opportunity to use the phrase spontaneously.

The same steps can be followed to teach a child to use three-word phrases to meet needs previously met by two-word phrases.

TEACHING MEANINGS — WORDS AND PHRASES

In language teaching, as in all teaching, the aim is to give just as much help as the child needs, and no more.

We suggest below some techniques for helping your child to learn new words and phrases. The techniques near the bottom of our list (level 3) give the most help and those nearer the top (level 1) give less help. As a general rule, use level 1 techniques once your child has shown that he *can* say the word or phrase, and level 2 or 3 techniques when the word or phrase is still new to him.

Level 1

1. Ask questions.

Questions tell your child that a response is required without telling him what that response should be. Try to avoid questions which require a 'yes/no' answer; instead, ask *open-ended* questions such as:

'What's that?'
'What are you doing?'
'What's happening?'
'Where's . . .?'

Aim to *vary* your questions — we have seen children who think that talking is something you do only when someone asks 'What's that?'

2. Use unfinished sentences.

Leaving off the last word or phrase lets your child know that something is expected. Your manner, as well as what you say, will encourage him to speak. For example:

'This is a . . . (ball).'
'You have a . . . (doll).'
'Car goes . . . (up).'
'I have a little car and you have a . . . (big car).'
'Where's Dolly? . . . She's . . . (in the bath).'

3. Make statements.

Statements do include the objective word or phrase, but this word or phrase is used among others in the sentence, so it is not directly demonstrated for the child to copy. For example:

'The car goes up the hill.' (Objective: up)
'Dolly wants more juice.' (Objective: more)
'I see the red ball over there.' (Objective: red ball)
'Teddy eats cake and Bunny eats cake.' (Objective: Agent + action + object)

Level 2

4. Mouth the word or phrase silently or give the beginning sound or word.

These techniques can work well when the child is trying to think of a word or phrase and is looking to you for help. Try them when your child does not answer your question or respond to your unfinished sentence. If he responds to the hint you give him, ask your original question again, to give him a chance to use the word or phrase without help. For example:

'What have I got?'. . . (silently mouth 'puppy')
'Look, here's a . . .' (silently mouth 'flower')
'It's a little . . .mmm' (Objective: Mouse)
'What's happening? . . . Dolly . . .' (Objective: Dolly sit)

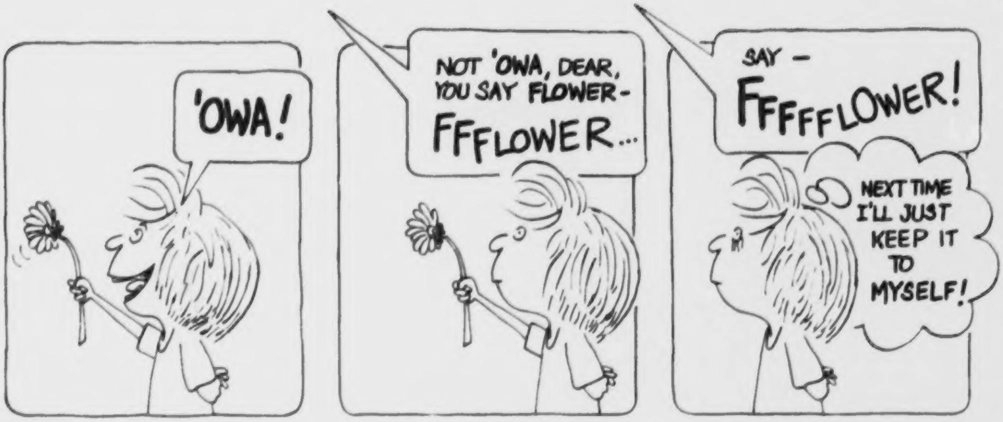
Level 3

5. Demonstrate the word or phrase.

Say the word or phrase simply, for your child to copy. If he copies you successfully, follow with a question or unfinished sentence to give him the chance to say it by himself. Keep in mind that some children need time to digest a word or phrase before they copy it. So do *wait* before repeating your demonstration. When your child is just starting to talk, many demonstrations may be met by silence or by a noise quite unlike that you are aiming for. Intersperse your demonstrations with lots of play that relates to your objective, to help maintain your child's interest and encourage him to want to say the word.

6. Add some physical help.

In the previous chapter we talked about using your fingers to move your child's mouth into the right shape for making a sound. This can also be


'OWA!
NOT 'OWA, DEAR, YOU SAY FLOWER - FFFLOWER...
SAY - FFFFFLOWER!
NEXT TIME I'LL JUST KEEP IT TO MYSELF!

done with words, but only if your child accepts it. If he doesn't like being touched in this way, he will not want to say the word.

7. **Teach the word with an action.**
This technique is most useful with children who are just starting to use words. It can help to bridge the gap between the preverbal and verbal stages of communication. Find an action which mimes the word. The word 'cup', for instance, can be mimed by lifting a cup (real or imaginary) to the lips. At first, respond enthusiastically if your child uses the action alone. Once the action is learned, respond only if he makes a sound with the action — any sound will do to start with. Then let him know that his sound must be like your sound; gradually he will learn a clear, consistent approximation to the new word.

At All Levels

Always reinforce your child naturally, conversationally, when he talks to you. He needs to know that he has been understood and that you are interested in what he has to say. He needs to discover that what he says can have positive results for him — either practical or emotional. You can also use your reinforcement to *extend* your child's language skills, by showing him a slightly more specific or more sophisticated way that he could express his meaning. Here's another example:

Alison: Cat.
Father: Yes, it's a white cat!
Alison: Meeow.
Father: 'Meeow' says the cat. Meeow.
Alison: Cat!
Father: Pretty cat. What's she doing?
Alison: Milk.
Father: The cat wants milk, does she?
Alison: Want milk.
Father: OK, let's get milk for the cat.

SOME EXAMPLES

Let's look now at some examples of language teaching sessions. We draw our examples from case studies of three children at quite different levels of verbal ability. Belinda is just starting to communicate using words. David is learning to put words together into two-word phrases. Carlie is making good progress at the three-word level, and is also learning to use correct grammatical features when she talks. All three children are learning to extend their *uses* of language as well as the *meanings* they can express.

Belinda

Belinda's parents took a sample of her language and found that she used 'no', and eight naming words, in addition to 'Mummy' and 'Daddy'. They decided to teach her to say three more naming words — 'juice', 'car' and (because she loves to listen to the cassette player) 'music', plus the action word 'jump'.

From her *uses of language* checklist, they noted that she was still using a gesture plus the all-purpose word 'dat' (that) to request the things she wanted. So they added to her objectives that she should use words, when the appropriate word was known to her, to *request* wanted objects. Here are some extracts from teaching sessions with Belinda.

Objective: 'Juice'
Setting: Afternoon teatime
Progress so far: Belinda has copied this word in several previous teaching sessions.

Mother: It's time for some juice.
What do you want?
Belinda: Dat. (points to fridge)
Mother: What do I keep in the fridge?
Belinda: Ipeam (ice-cream)!
Mother: (laughing)
Yes, there's ice-cream and . . .
(points to juice bottle)
Belinda: (says nothing)
Mother: Look, here's the juice.
I'm pouring the juice.
What do you want?
Belinda: Dat.
Mother: Yes, you want juice. Look at me.
(establishes eye contact)
Juice.
Belinda: Oose.
Mother: There's your juice.
Yummy pineapple juice!

You will notice in the above example how the word ('juice') and the use of language (requesting objects) are being taught at the same time. Notice too how Belinda's mother gives her the opportunity to meet her objectives without direct help (by using statements, questions and unfinished sentences) before she steps in with a demonstration. She knows from previous teaching sessions that Belinda is able to say the word. In the following session, Belinda's mother focuses on her new objective, 'jump', for the first time.

Objective: 'Jump'
Setting: The play area. Plenty of dolls and soft toys are at hand.
Progress so far: This is a new objective for Belinda.

Mother: Look what Teddy can do.
Jump. Jump. Jump. (jumps Teddy on the mat)
Belinda: Teddy.
Mother: Clever Teddy.
Watch him jump.
Belinda: (makes no response)
Mother: You make Teddy jump.
Belinda: (jumps Teddy)
Mother: Oh, good jumping, Ted.
Jump, jump.
(pauses, waiting for a response)
Belinda: (throws Teddy away)
Dolly.
Mother: (delighted that Belinda has used a word to demand an object)
Here's Dolly.
Can Dolly jump?
Belinda: (jumps doll)
Bumpumpump.
Mother: Oh, she's a clever, clever doll.
Wheeeee jump!

Here, Belinda's mother gives demonstrations right from the beginning. She takes care to keep Belinda actively involved in the play and to follow her lead. When Belinda is able to copy 'jump' a little more readily, her mother will begin to give her opportunities to say the word with less help, as she did with 'juice' above.

David

David's language sample showed that he had over 50 single words, expressing a wide range of meanings. He used a single two-word phrase: 'No bath.'

David's parents decided to teach him to use 'no + . . .' phrases to reject a wider range of unwanted objects and services and to use *action + object* phrases. As he enjoyed playing with cars, trucks and trains they selected the phrase 'push car' to start with, and planned to move on next to other 'push + . . .' phrases. Here are some extracts from teaching sessions with David.

Objective: 'Push car'
Setting: The sand pit
Progress so far: This is a new objective for David.

Father: I'm building a road.
David: Road.
Father: Oh, that's a great road.
Here's my car.
Push car.
David: Brmmm, brm, brmmmm.
Father: Brmmmmm says the car.
Look, I push a car.
David: Car.
Father: Yes, you can push your car. Push . . . push car.
David: Push. Brmmmmmm.
Father: Brmmmmmm. Push car.
David: Push.

Father: Look at me, Davie.
Push car.
David: Push car.
Father: Push car up the hill.

David's father used lots of demonstrations in this session because the phrase was new to David. Because David is more familiar with 'no + . . .' constructions, his parents use less directive methods in the session below.

Objective: Rejects objects and services using 'no + . . .'
Setting: Mealtime
Progress so far: David has made some 'no + . . .' phrases in other settings.

Mother: What will you have, David? Sausages?
David: Mmmm. Ta. Sausage!
Mother: You love sausages, don't you?
(attends to other members of the family)
Father: Want some beans, Dave?
David: No.
Father: I see, no beans.
You tell me . . . No . . .
David: Beans.
Father: No beans for David. What about you, Paul?
Mother: There's some gravy here. Have some gravy, David?
David: No. Sauce.
Mother: Fine. You tell me. No . . .
David: No gravy. Sauce.
Mother: Tomato sauce, coming up!

Carlie

Carlie was using a range of single words and two-word phrases, plus quite a few three-word phrases. Her mother decided from her checklist that Carlie needed to use more three-word *location* phrases, and that she was ready to learn to use the pronouns 'he', 'she' and 'they'.

Carlie's mother was also keen that she should use three-word phrases to share information in their play together and particularly that she should *initiate* in their playtime conversations. Here is an extract from a teaching session with Carlie.

Objectives: Three-word location phrases
Pronouns 'he', 'she' and 'they'
Initiating in conversation
Setting: The doll's house, and a family of small dolls
Progress so far: Carlie has previously used a couple of three-word location phrases.

Mother: Here's the Daddy doll. He sits here.
Carlie: No, Mummy sit.
Mother: Oh? Where does she sit?
Carlie: Here.
Mother: OK, she sits here and he sits there.
(waits, to give Carlie the chance to initiate)
Carlie: I want Baby.
Mother: Where is she?
Carlie: There she is.
Mother: I see, she's in the box. Where will we put her?
Carlie: Baby tired.
Mother: Put her to bed. There.
Where is she now?
Carlie: Bed.
Mother: She's . . .
Carlie: She in bed.
Mother: Sleep tight, Baby.
Sleep in bed.
(waits again)
Carlie: Baby's crying.
Mother: She needs Mummy.
Where's Mummy?
Carlie: There's Mummy.
Mother: Where?
Carlie: She on chair.
Mother: So she is!
Tell Baby where her Mummy is.
Carlie: Mummy on chair, Baby.
Mother: She's on the chair.
How's Baby now?
Carlie: Good.
Mother: She feels good.
That's lovely.

Carlie's mother was able to work towards all Carlie's objectives in this one session. Because she was very aware of what Carlie needed to learn, she was able to follow Carlie's lead and use new twists in the game to emphasise the kinds of phrases and grammatical features she was aiming for. She used a combination of questions, unfinished sentences and demonstrations to help Carlie make new location phrases and use the pronouns, and, just as importantly, she *waited* from time to time to give her daughter the chance to initiate.

AS YOUR CHILD PROGRESSES

As your child masters the words, phrases, grammatical features and uses of language that you are teaching him, enter them on his checklists. Make sure that he can use his new skills quite independently, and not just when copying you, before deciding that your objective has been reached. It's a good idea to record the date beside each new entry on your checklist, so that you can keep track of progress. Once an objective has been achieved, you can set a new one to replace it, using your up-to-date checklists as a guide.

We suggest that you take a fresh language sample every few months, to give yourself a new perspective on your child's progress. Once talking is under way, your child is likely to pick up words and phrases and uses of language that you haven't directly taught him. Regular language samples also help you check that your child is continuing to make use of skills learned weeks or months ago.

You may find it helpful to start fresh checklists now and again, particularly after taking language samples. Feel free to photocopy these checklists before you use them, so that you have as many as you need.

SUMMING UP

Here again are some of the major principles for teaching language to the verbal child:

- Assess your child using a language sample and the checklists.
- From your checklists, select objectives for your child that reflect both his needs and his interests. Your objectives should extend your child's uses of language, the meanings your child can express and, if he is ready, the grammatical features he can use.
- Teach your child in natural settings and specially planned play sessions.
- Take turns in conversation with your child and expect him to make a response.
- Give him as much help as he needs, and no more.
- Respond conversationally when your child talks to you and show him in your reply how he could extend his skills further.
- Use your checklists to keep a record of your child's progress and to select new objectives when old ones have been met.
- Seek specialist help if your child has problems with articulation or if he does not make progress on the methods described.
- Help your child to enjoy his conversations with you. You can do this most effectively by showing that *you* enjoy your conversations with him! Knowing what you are aiming for, and recognising progress, however slight, as it occurs, will help you to enjoy them all the more.

Checklist 3.1 Your Child's Uses of Language: Single Words

Note: Place two ticks on the checklist for each word in your language sample.
Tick in the first column opposite the description that best suits each word.
Tick under *Initiates* if your child has initiated this interaction,
or under *Follows up* if your child has followed up.

	Place a tick for each word used for this purpose	*Initiates*	*Follows up*
Greets and farewells Does your child use words to greet people (or toys) as they arrive and to farewell them as they leave?			
Requests objects Does your child use words to ask for the things she wants? For example, does she point to the fruit bowl and say 'banana'?			
Requests services Does your child use words to ask you to do something for her? For example, does she tug at your clothes and say 'up', requesting to be picked up?			
Requests information Does your child use words to ask you to tell her something? For example, does she hold up an unknown object and say 'dat' — meaning 'What's that?'			
Rejects objects Does your child use words to let know that she does not want something? For example, does she say 'no' when you offer her an unwanted drink?			
Rejects services Does your child use words to let you know when she does not want you to do something for her? For example, does she pull away and say 'no' when you offer to take her to the toilet?			
Rejects information Does your child use words to tell you when she doesn't like something you have said or when she disagrees with you? For example, does she shake her head and say 'home' when you tell her it's time to go shopping? Or does she correct you if you point to a picture of a cat and tell her that it is a mouse?			

Checklist 3.1 Your Child's Uses of Language: Single Words

	Place a tick for each word used for this purpose	*Initiates*	*Follows up*
Gives objects Does your child use words while offering or giving something to someone else, as part of the act of giving? For example, does she hand a biscuit to a friend and say 'you'?			
Gives services Does your child use words as part of doing something for you? For example, does she bring a towel to you while you are washing the baby, and say 'baby'?			
Gives information Does your child use words to tell you about something that is happening? For example, does she tell you 'Daddy' when she hears a car in the drive?			
Innovates Does your child use her language skills as part of her play? For example, does she chant 'baa baa baa' along with her favourite nursery rhyme? Or does she pretend that something is really something else? (Note that words can often belong to another category at the same time as this one.)		N/A	N/A
Practises Does your child practise her words by talking to herself, without communicating with anyone else?		N/A	N/A

Checklist 3.2 Your Child's Uses of Language: Phrases

Note: Place two ticks on the checklist for each phrase in your language sample.
Tick in the first column opposite the description that best suits each phrase.
Tick under *Initiates* if your child has initiated this interaction,
or under *Follows up* if your child has followed up.

	Place a tick for each phrase used for this purpose	*Initiates*	*Follows up*
Greets and farewells Does your child use phrases to greet people (or toys) as they arrive and to farewell them as they leave?			
Requests objects Does your child use phrases to ask for the things he wants? For example, does he point to the fruit bowl and say 'I want banana'?			
Requests services Does your child use phrases to ask you to do something for him? For example, does he tug at your clothes and say 'Pick up'?			
Requests information Does your child use phrases to ask you to tell him something? For example, does he point to an unknown object and say 'What's that?'			
Rejects objects Does your child use phrases to let you know that he does not want something? For example, does he say 'No milk' when you offer him an unwanted drink?			
Rejects services Does your child use phrases to let you know when he does not want you to do something for him? For example, does he say 'No toilet' when you offer to take him to the toilet?			
Rejects information Does your child uses phrases to tell you when he doesn't like something you have said or when he disagrees with you? For example, does he say 'Stay here' when you tell him it's time to go shopping? Or if you point to a picture of a cat and tell him that it's a mouse, does he say 'Not mouse, cat'?			

Checklist 3.2 Your Child's Uses of Language: Phrases

	Place a tick for each phrase used for this purpose	*Initiates*	*Follows up*
Gives objects Does your child use phrases while offering or giving something to someone else, as part of the act of giving? For example, does he hand a biscuit to a friend and say 'Eat this'?			
Gives services Does your child use phrases as part of doing something for you? For example, does he bring a towel to you while you are washing the baby, and say 'Dry baby'?			
Gives shared information Does your child use phrases to tell you things that you both know? For example, while you are reading a book together, does he point out a picture and say 'Look, a truck'?			
Gives new information Does your child use phrases to tell you things you may not already know? For example, does he tell you about things that have happened that day at preschool, or does he run indoors to tell you 'Postman's coming'?			
Innovates Does your child use phrases as part of his play? For example, does he find a stick and say 'Look, a boat'? Or does he climb on your back and say 'You be elephant'? (Note that phrases can belong to another category at the same time as this one.)			
Comments The child may continue to practise by talking to himself in his bed or car seat. As well (or instead), does he use phrases to comment *to himself* about what is happening to him?		N/A	N/A

Checklist 3.3 The Meanings Your Child Can Express: Single Words

	Minimum number of words to aim for	*Number of words used*
Naming words Does your child use single words that name *objects* or *people?* For example, car, Mummy, banana, bird.	30	
Action words Does your child use single words that describe *actions?* For example, jump, drink, sit, go. (Words such as 'up' and 'down' which are usually location words are often used by children to describe actions. Always look at your child's meaning, rather than the dictionary definitions of the words used.)	17	
Negation words Does your child use single words — to *reject* things? That is, does your child say 'no'? — to indicate that something has *disappeared?* For example, gone, all-gone. — to indicate that something has *ceased?* For example, stop.	3 (one of each type)	
Location words Does your child use single words that describe *where something is* or *where something is happening?* For example, in, there, under. (Words like 'bed', 'chair', 'bath', which are usually naming words, are often used to indicate where something is. Include such words here if they are used in this way.)	6	
Recurrence words Does your child use the single words *more* and/or *again?* (Note that these words, especially 'more', often occur spontaneously quite early in language learning. From choice, we suggest leaving them until your child has 20 or 30 other words. Our reason? 'More' often becomes an all-purpose word, which children use to ask for things instead of using more specific words.)	2	

Checklist 3.3 The Meanings Your Child Can Express: Single Words

List of words used

Checklist 3.4 The Meanings Your Child Can Express: Two-Word Phrases

	Minimum number of phrases to aim for	*Number of phrases used*
Agent + action phrases Does your child use two-word phrases that combine an agent (or naming word) and an action, in that order? For example: Mummy sit; Car go; Dolly sleep; Clown jump. (Each phrase recorded should contain a different action word.)	15	
Action + object phrases Does your child use two-word phrases that combine an action and an object (or naming word), in that order? For example: Sit dolly; Push car; Eat banana; Wash knees. (Each phrase recorded should contain a different action word, though these action words may be the same as those used for agent + action phrases.)	15	
Negation phrases Does your child use two-word phrases that contain negation words (one of each type)? Record any phrases opposite the type to which they belong. *Rejection* For example: No milk; No bath. *Disappearance* For example: Car gone; Dinner all-gone. *Cessation* For example: Music stop.	3 (one of each type)	
Recurrence phrases Does your child use two-word phrases containing recurrence words such as more, another, again? For example: More pie; Another sausage; Push again. (Do not record more than two phrases containing the same recurrence word — for instance, no more than two 'more' phrases.)	3	

Checklist 3.4 The Meanings Your Child Can Express: Two-Word Phrases

List of phrases used

Checklist 3.4 The Meanings Your Child Can Express: Two-Word Phrases

	Minimum number of phrases to aim for	*Number of phrases used*
Location phrases Does your child use two-word phrases which describe where something is or where something is happening? For example: Kitty up; In box; Climb up. (Note that some naming words can also be used as location words. For example: Sleep bed; Sit chair; Birdie tree. Examples such as these should be recorded here, because the child's *meaning* relates to *location*. Each phrase recorded should contain a different location word.)	10	
Demonstrative phrases Does your child use two-word phrases which include the words 'this', 'that', 'the' or 'a'? For example: This sandwich; That book; The cow; A crayon. (Do not record more than two phrases containing the same demonstrative word — for instance, no more than two 'this' phrases.)	4	
Attribute phrases Does your child use two-word phrases that describe what an object or an action is like? For example: Red ball; Hot bath; Run fast; Jump high. (Each phrase recorded should contain a different attribute word.)	5	
Possession phrases Does your child use two-word phrases that indicate who owns something? (Note that grammatical features such as apostrophe 's' and possessive pronouns may or may not be present. The child's *meaning* is the most important factor.) For example: Daddy car (meaning Daddy's car); Susie's bike; My Teddy; Mine apple; That's mine. (Each phrase recorded should contain a different possession word.)	4	

Checklist 3.4 The Meanings Your Child Can Express: Two-Word Phrases

List of phrases used

Checklist 3.5 The Meanings Your Child Can Express: Three-Word Phrases (or more)

	Minimum number of phrases to aim for	*Number of phrases used*
Agent + action + object phrases Does your child use three-word phrases in which someone (or something) does something to someone (or something)? For example: Mummy push swing; Teddy eat banana; I see rainbow; Boy chase dog. (Emotive words such as 'like' and uses of the verb 'to be' such as 'am' and 'are' can also be included here. For example: I like cake; You are running.) (Each phrase recorded should contain a different action word.)	9	
Location phrases Does your child use three-word phrases which describe where something is or where something is happening? For example: Tommy in bath; Go under bridge; I climb up; Play outside now. (Each phrase recorded should contain a different location word.)	6	
Recurrence phrases Does your child use three-word phrases which include recurrence words such as 'more', 'another', 'again'? For example: Want more juice; Push me again; Have another cookie. (Do not record more than three phrases which contain the same recurrence word — for instance no more than three 'again' phrases.)	6	
Negation phrases Does your child use three-word phrases that contain negation words? (Record examples opposite the type to which they belong.) *Rejection* For example: No want carrot; Don't clean teeth. *Disappearance* For example: My ball's gone; No more lollies. *Cessation* For example: Loud noise stopped; Finish bath now.	6 (two of each type)	

Checklist 3.5 The Meanings Your Child Can Express: Three-Word Phrases (or more)

List of phrases used

Checklist 3.5 The Meanings Your Child Can Express: Three-Word Phrases (or more)

	Minimum number of phrases to aim for	*Number of phrases used*
Attribute phrases Does your child use three-word phrases that describe what an object or an action is like? For example: Daddy run fast; Want big dolly; Draw funny face; Smell pretty flower. (Each phrase recorded should contain a different attribute word.)	6	
Possession phrases Does your child use three word-phrases that indicate who owns something? (Note that grammatical features such as apostrophe 's' and possessive pronouns may or may not be present. The child's meaning is the most important factor.) For example: Wash my bike; That Sue school (meaning Sue's school); Your drink spilling; Kate's dolly cry. (Each phrase recorded should contain a different possession word.)	6	
Demonstrative phrases Does your child use three-word phrases which include the demonstrative words 'this', 'that', 'the' or 'a'? For example: Want a biscuit; Throw that here; Ride this bike; See the horse. (Do not include more than two phrases containing the same word — for instance, more than two 'that' phrases.)	6	
'Wh' questions Does your child ask three-word questions starting with 'wh' words such as 'where', 'when', 'who', 'what', 'why'? For example: Where's Mummy gone? When Poppa coming? Who knock on door? What you doing? Why Sally crying? (Do not record more than two questions starting with the same 'wh' word — for instance, more than two 'where' questions.)	6	
Yes/No questions Does your child ask questions of three words or more which can be answered by 'yes' or 'no'? For example: Is dinner ready? We going home now? Can I have some? Is this mine?	3	

Checklist 3.5 The Meanings Your Child Can Express: Three-Word Phrases (or more)

List of phrases used

Checklist 3.6 Grammatical Features

Note: The right column shows the stage of language development at which each grammatical feature usually appears or can be taught.

	Yes	*No*	*Stage*
Prepositions Does your child use prepositions to describe where something is or where it is happening? For example: in; on; under; out.			Late single word
Regular plurals Does your child use the plural 's' when referring to more than one object? For example: dolls; cats; bikes.			Late single word
Present participle 'ing' Does your child add 'ing' to action words to descibe an action that is continuing? For example: playing; jumping.			Early two word
Possessive pronouns my, mine Does your child say 'my' or 'mine' to indicate that he owns something?			Late two word
Possessive 's' Does your child use the apostrophe 's' to indicate that someone owns something? For example: Peter's shoe; That Mummy's.			Late two word
Pronouns I, you Does your child use the pronouns 'I' and 'you'?			Late two word
Pronouns him, her, me Does your child use the pronouns 'him', 'her' and 'me'?			Early three word
Contractible auxillary 's, 'm 're Does your child contract 'is', 'am' and 'are' to 's, 'm and 're in conjunction with an agent and an action word? For example: Peter's sitting; I'm playing; You're eating.			Early three word
Not Does your child use the word 'not'? For example: Mummy not here; I not go bed.			Mid three word
Pronouns he, she, they Does your child use the pronouns 'he', 'she' and 'they' to denote the agent of a phrase? For example: He a boy; They come soon.			Mid three word
Irregular plurals Does your child use irregular plurals correctly? For example: children; mice; men; teeth; lots of sheep.			Mid three word

Checklist 3.6 Grammatical Features

	Yes	*No*	*Stage*
N't Does your child contract 'not' to n't? For example: It isn't yours.			Mid three word
Contractible copular 'm, 's Does your child contract 'am' and 'is' to 'm and 's in conjunction with an agent and a word or phrase denoting an attribute, location or object? For example: I'm pretty; It's there; He's a boy.			Mid three word
Possessive pronouns their, your Does your child use 'their' or 'your' to indicate that someone owns something?			Mid three word
Articles a, the Does your child use the articles 'a' and 'the' in conjunction with a naming word? For example: A car's coming; Open the door.			Mid three word
Contractible copular 're Does your child contract 'are' to 're in conjunction with an agent and a word or phrases denoting an attribute, location or object? For example: They're hot; They're here; You're a girl.			Late three word
Future tense Does your child use the correct form to refer to events that will happen in the future? For example: Mummy will come soon; We are going swimming.			Late three word
Uncontractible copular am, is, are As for the contractible copular, does your child use the uncontracted copular? For example: I am pretty; It is there; He is a boy; They are hot.			Late three word
Uncontractible auxiliary am, is, are As for the contractible auxillary, does your child use the uncontracted auxiliary? For example: Peter is sitting. I am playing. You are eating.			Late three word
Past tense 'ed' Does your child add 'ed' to action words to denote the past tense? For example: I jumped; She walked home.			Late three word

Checklist 3.6 Grammatical Features

	Yes	*No*	*Stage*
And Does your child use the conjunction 'and' to connect two ideas within a phrase or sentence? For example: I want juice and banana; Come here and play with me.			Late three word
Subject – verb agreement Does your child use sentences or phrases in which the subject and verb agree? For example: I jump; You jump; She jumps; I am jumping; She is jumping.			Late three word
Irregular past tense Does your child use the correct past tense form of a verb where that form is irregular? For example: He went out; You came back; I saw a dog.			Late three word

Small Steps is an Early Intervention Program for young children with developmental delays. The kit consists of eight books, and an optional videotape program.

Book 1: Introduction to Small Steps
This introductory book presents the background to Small Steps, and suggests ways in which it can be used.

Book 2: Your Child's Program
This book explains how to select goals for the individual child, and how to help the child achieve these goals in the context of family life.

Book 3: Communication Skills
This book is concerned with language learning, at both the preverbal and verbal levels. Language is seen in the context of social interaction, and skills are taught through play and 'everyday' activities.

Book 4: Gross Motor Skills
This book presents the skills which involve the large muscles of the body. These enable a child to sit, crawl, walk, climb, catch a ball and so on. It has been prepared by physiotherapists experienced with young children with disabilities.

Book 5: Fine Motor Skills
Fine Motor skills use the small muscles of the hand and eye. They range from the baby's first grasp of the parent's finger to complex skills such as drawing and cutting. Also included are problem-solving skills and the development of concepts such as colour, shape and size.

Book 6: Receptive Language Skills
Receptive Language skills involve the understanding of the language of others. They enable a child to attend to what others are saying, to follow directions and, most importantly, to use language him or herself.

Book 7: Personal and Social Skills
In this book we look at skills that help children to relate to others, to play and to achieve independence in eating, toileting, dressing and grooming.

Book 8: Developmental Skills Inventory
The D.S.I. draws together the individual parts of Small Steps. It is a series of checklists used for assessing the child and as a guide for setting objectives.

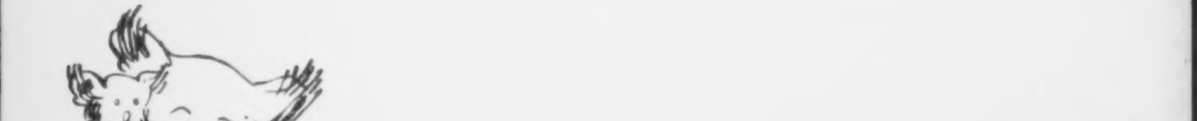
SMALL STEPS

AN EARLY INTERVENTION PROGRAM FOR CHILDREN WITH DEVELOPMENTAL DELAYS

Book 4 Gross Motor Skills

Diana Uther and Erica Brar
with Moira Pieterse and Robin Treloar

Macquarie University Sydney



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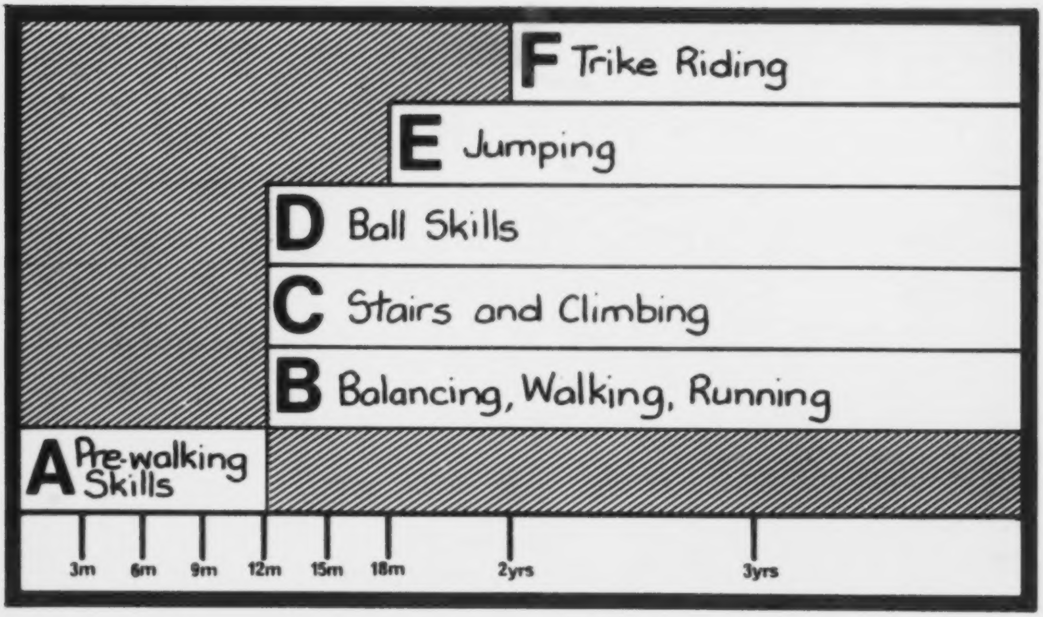

F Trike Riding
E Jumping
D Ball Skills
C Stairs and Climbing
B Balancing, Walking, Running
A Pre-walking Skills
3m
6m
9m
12m
15m
18m
2yrs
3yrs

Introduction

Gross Motor skills are skills which involve movements, or combinations of movements, of the large muscles of the body.

They may be distinguished from Fine Motor skills, which involve the small muscles of the hand and eye, but of course there are many overlaps between these two skill areas.

The child's motor development takes place in a very predictable way, passing through such familiar milestones as pushing up with the arms when on the tummy, sitting without support, crawling and taking those first tentative steps. The baby learns to control first her head, then her shoulders, then her hips. As she gains control over these large muscle groups she achieves the strength and stability she needs for the development of smaller muscle groups — first her elbows and knees, then her wrists and ankles, and finally her hands, feet and tongue. It is these smaller muscles that are responsible for 'quality' in the child's skills, while the larger groups hold her stable against gravity.

This program presents the major Gross Motor skills, from birth to the 4-year-old level of development.

Different aspects of development are covered in different sequences, as follows:

GM.A:	Prewalking
GM.B:	Balancing, Walking, Running
GM.C:	Stairs and Climbing
GM.D:	Ball Skills
GM.E:	Jumping
GM.F:	Trike Riding

The table on the opposite page will show you which sequences can be taught in parallel.

Who can use this program? This program is used particularly for children who, for whatever reason, are delayed (or at risk of delay) in their Gross Motor development. This delay may be due to damage to the central nervous system, intellectual disability, emotional disturbance or visual impairment. Or it may be a slowness in physical development that is not associated with any of these, as with some premature babies.

Who might need specialised assistance? Seek specialised assistance if you have any doubts about the child's progress — particularly if your child feels floppy or stiff. Of course, specialised assistance is the ideal with any child with a disability! If you are receiving such help, it is unwise to use this or any other program without discussing it with your specialist first.

Is there any point in teaching Gross Motor skills to the child who is not apparently physically handicapped? Any child will benefit from being taught Gross Motor skills. A non-disabled child can participate purely for enjoyment. Sometimes a physical disability will not be noticed until the child starts to attempt more advanced skills or fall behind her peers. A child who is at risk of delay can be helped to avoid or minimise it if, through correct handling, her muscles are prepared for 'normal' movement. Children with any degree of intellectual disability are at risk of delay in the motor area and therefore should be prepared for these skills from an early age.

What are the main points to remember about teaching Gross Motor? If babies have difficulty with movement, they may use the wrong muscles or they may use their muscles incorrectly. It is most important to teach the correct use of muscles, in a balanced way, so that a baby will learn to move normally. With babies, there is no need for specific exercise time. Every interaction between you and your baby and every position you leave her in are actually 'treatment'. You must be conscious of always nursing your baby, carrying her, picking her up and so on, to her best advantage. All the prewalking exercises in this program can be done as part of normal handling and/or as play activities.

Here are a few very important ideas that will apply to all the future Gross Motor development of your child. These ideas will probably sound strange, and if you have older children, you will find you have to relearn how to carry your baby, how to pick her up and put her down, and nurse her. However, if you can learn to use these new handling techniques, you will find you will not have to spend much time teaching individual skills, as you will have been preparing your baby's muscles ahead of time.

The new concepts to keep in mind at all times are as follows:

- Always carry your baby with as little support as possible. Developmentally delayed babies are generally not as active, and so have to be encouraged to move.
- Always try to carry, pick up and put down, nurse and play with your baby in a special way by building in a 'twist', or rotation, and having her 'off centre'.

Developmentally delayed babies preferentially develop all their movement in a 'forward and backward' plane. The most important goal in all your child's Gross Motor development is to discourage this, and encourage all her movement to take place on the *diagonal*. This means that you must look to helping your baby bring her opposite shoulder to her opposite hip, or her opposite hand to her opposite knee or foot. If you can pick up and put down, nurse and play with this in mind, you will be building in the essential building blocks for your baby. And you will find she passes more easily from skill to skill, even if she moves out of the positions you place her in.

Attention to beneficial movement and positioning is important for the older child too. Be aware of how your child sits in her chair or on the floor in front of the television.

It is very important to work within the child's capabilities, extending her just a little at a time. In this way she will feel confident about movement, and it will always be fun for her. Encourage her to move as independently as possible.

Some other points to remember are:

- *Talk* with your child — tell her what you want her to do. Get into the habit of describing the action even before she understands the words.
- Encourage her to do as much of the movement as possible *by herself*.
- Combine movements with functional or play activities attractive to your child, so that she can see a *purpose* in the movement.
- For special exercise sessions, choose times of day when your child is happy and keep the sessions *short*. Several short sessions are better than one long one.
- Reward any effort your child makes with lots of *praise*.
- If your child does not start this program at the beginning, it is very worthwhile filling in any 'gaps' before you progress.

It is important to mention here that equipment such as baby walkers, jolly jumpers and crawlers should not be used. This equipment could encourage your baby to use her muscles the wrong way, and this will eventually lead to a poor quality of movement.

Those wishing to read further about the principles of movement outlined in these sequences could refer to Lois Bly, 'The Components of Normal Movement During the First Year of Life' in Slator, D. S. (ed.), *The Development of Movement in Infancy* (University of North Carolina, 1980).

Acknowledgments are due to Vickie Meade and Lea Maher. Further information is available from Meade/Maher Courses, 16 Pindari Cres., Beauty Point NSW 2088.

CHAPTER 1

GM.A: Prewalking

In this sequence we look at the child's increasing control over the large muscles of her body, from the first attempts to lift and turn her head, to the point where she can walk with her hands held.

The average child makes this huge leap in the first year of life. She learns many, many skills along the way — skills that allow her to control her head, play on her tummy, on her side and on her back, roll, sit, crawl, kneel, stand and move from one position to another. So it's not surprising that this sequence is a long one.

To help you find your way through this sequence, and identify precisely the level that your child has reached, we present nine different age levels within this sequence. These age levels show the age at which the average child acquires each skill. If your child is not 'average', use the age levels to check that you are giving attention to all the skills that are important at her stage of development. Don't ever feel tempted to jump ahead a few skills. In the long run this could put her back in her development and make her fearful of movement. The important thing is that she gains the skills, not when she gains them.

Many early Gross Motor skills can be taught largely — even entirely — through the way you handle the child as you care for her through the day — the way you carry her, the positions in which you place her and the games you play together. Routine tasks like nappy changing can become productive teaching times. Much of your teaching can be combined with Language and Fine Motor activities. So it need not take up excessive amounts of your time to help your child to learn these vital early Gross Motor skills.

Below we list all the skills in this sequence.

0 to 2 months

1. On tummy, turns head to either side.
2. On tummy, raises head and maintains at 45°.
3. Lifts head from shoulder in side lying.
4. Attempts to lift head when pulled to sit from 45°.

3 months

5. On tummy, lifts head to 90°, weight on forearms.
6. On back, keeps head in midline with chin tuck.
7. On back, brings hands together on chest.
8. Pulled to sit, only slight head lag.
9. Held in sitting, holds head up, chin jutting.
10. Held in standing, bears some weight.

4 months

11. On tummy, bears weight on forearms, with elbows in front of shoulders and chin tucked.
12. On tummy, legs not always frogged, random kicking.
13. On back, plays with arms held up and away from body.
14. On back, brings hands to knees.
15. On back, rolls to side.
16. Pulled to sit, keeps head in line with body.
17. Pulled to sit through side lying, holds head steady.
18. Sitting, holds head steady, with chin tuck.
19. Standing, takes most weight and controls head and upper trunk.

5 months

20. On tummy, takes weight on extended arms.
21. On tummy, weight on forearms, reaches for a toy.
22. On tummy, accidentally rolls to back.
23. On back, reaches out with straight arms, hands together.
24. On back, rolls to side, remaining on side to play.
25. Sits unsupported for one minute.
26. Standing, feet flat, leans on support.

6 months

27. On tummy, full balance reactions present.
28. On tummy, props on extended arms, raising trunk and tummy.
29. On tummy, lifts legs up behind, and close together.

30. On tummy, semi-rolls to side to reach for a toy.
31. On tummy, attempts to reach while on straight arms.
32. On back, rolls to tummy.
33. Pulled to sit, initiates with head, pulls with arms.
34. Sitting, puts straight arms forward to avoid a fall.
35. Sits for 10 minutes, arms free to reach and play.
36. Standing, takes full weight.

7 months

37. On tummy, turns in circles.
38. On tummy, rolls to side and plays, propped on one elbow.
39. On tummy, gets to crawl position and rocks.
40. Gets from crawl position to sitting.
41. On tummy, creeps forward with arm pull.
42. On back, full balance reactions present.
43. Sitting, rotates trunk, plays freely with arms.
44. Gets to sitting from tummy.
45. Pulls to stand, straightening both legs, pulls with arms.
46. Stands at furniture, supporting with arms, and bounces.

8 months

47. Sitting, fully developed trunk balance reactions present.
48. Sits unsupported, does not fall when reaching to the side.
49. Sitting, props on a straight arm to the side to prevent a fall.
50. Gets from sitting to crawl position.
51. Crawls alone.
52. Pulls to kneel and maintains.
53. Standing at furniture, relies on legs more than arms.

9 months

54. Standing at furniture, turns around and reaches with one hand.
55. Gets from standing to sitting on floor by falling.
56. Cruises sideways around furniture.
57. Pulls to stand, relies on arms, passes through half-kneeling.
58. Cruises around furniture, semi-turned in the direction of travel.
59. Stands, one hand held.

10 to 11 months

60. Uses a great variety of sitting positions.
61. Sitting, props with straight arms backwards to prevent a fall.
62. Gets from standing to floor, using hand to stabilise on furniture.
63. Gets to stand through half-kneeling or squat positions, with little arm support.
64. Walks sideways along a wall.
65. Walks with both hands held low.

ON TUMMY, TURNS HEAD TO EITHER SIDE

GM.A.1

Turning her head from side to side is a very important step. It is the baby's first movement against gravity. To turn her head the baby must shift her weight to the side. Shifting weight is a skill used in all future movement.

How to Assess

Materials: A flat, firm surface, such as a bunny rug on a table.

Method: Place your child on her tummy on the rug.

Score *plus* if your child can lift her head to turn to the opposite side.

How to Teach

Place your child on her tummy with her head facing away from you. Using a rattle and/or your voice, encourage her to turn her head to look at you.

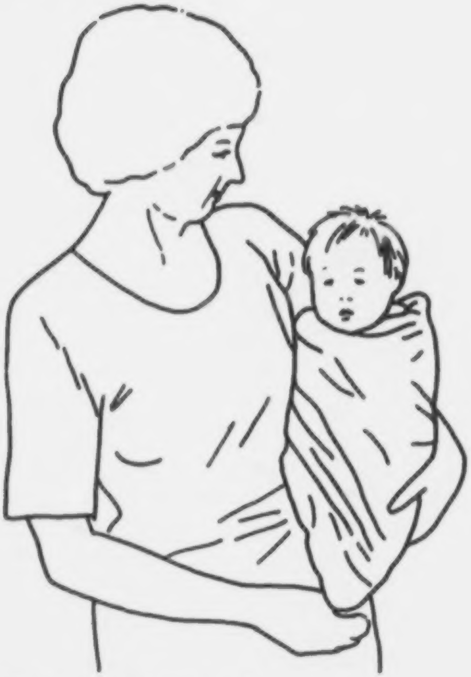
If necessary, cup your hand on her forehead and guide her head up and around to see you.

A large beach ball can be used to help teach this skill. Place the child on her tummy over the ball and use the techniques described above to encourage the movement. Gently roll the ball a few degrees side to side.

Make sure that you alternate the side that you place her head on so that she gets equal practice turning to each side.

Positioning, Carrying and Playing

Give your child plenty of time on her tummy. Let her sleep on her tummy, lie on a rug on her tummy and lie across your knees on her tummy while you call her and talk to her. Always give her a firm surface to push against. This includes a firm mattress to sleep on.



Wrap your baby securely . . .

It has been shown that babies who are placed frequently on their tummies develop their Gross Motor skills more quickly than those who are placed mostly on their backs.

It is especially important that developmentally delayed, low-toned ('floppy') babies are not placed to sleep — or play unsupervised — on their backs. An alternative to the tummy position is to wrap your baby securely in a bunny rug and place her on her side, taking care to alternate the side on which you place her. Place toys close by for her to look at.

Another good position for your baby is to place her firmly wrapped on her side in a firm beanbag — again with things of interest to look at. (The muscles at the side of her neck also help lift her head backward and forward.)

Wrap your baby securely in a bunny rug when you carry her. Wrap her so that her arms are brought forward across her chest and her legs are bent up. When she is held like this, the baby doesn't have to think about controlling her arms and legs, and so it is easier for her to control her head.

This firmly wrapped position is an ideal way to put your baby to sleep in the first few months.

Carry your baby up over your shoulder, so that she is supporting her own head. If she is tired or has poor head control, lower her a little so that she can lean her head against your shoulder or face, but is free to lift it away if she feels she can.

Alternatively, carry your securely wrapped baby in the crook of your arm, with her head above the support of your arm if possible. Do not carry your baby lying on her back in your arms. An alternative is to carry her lying on her side, facing out, both arms forward.

Every time you pick your baby up, carry her, put her down, bathe her and so on, you can help her to learn to control her head.

ON TUMMY, RAISES HEAD AND MAINTAINS AT 45°

GM.A.2

There are four directions in which the child must learn to control her head — lifting her head against gravity while lying on her tummy is one. The others are lifting her head when lying on her back, and lifting it up to the side when placed on alternate sides.

The child first lifts her head against gravity to turn it to either side, as in the previous item. Here we look at whether she can maintain her head at a 45° angle for five seconds.

How to Assess

Materials: A flat, firm surface.

Method: Place the child on her tummy with her hands placed beneath her shoulders.

Score *plus* if your child can lift her head off the surface so her face is at a 45° angle to the floor and maintain the position for five seconds.

How to Teach

With a very young or very floppy baby you may need to raise her head off the surface by putting a small wedge, pillow or rolled-up towel under her chest. Her arms should be forward over the wedge to encourage her to push on her forearms and hands.

Place your child so that your face can be level with hers, for example on a table or bed. Encourage her to lift her head by talking to her and shaking a rattle.

You may need to place your hand on her bottom to help her to anchor it, or place your hands over her forearms so that the effort of lifting her head doesn't lift her arms backwards behind her.

Always keep her elbows placed in a pushing position, directly under her shoulders.

As it becomes easier for her to lift her head, remove any props, such as the wedge, and reduce your physical help.

A mirror at floor level will encourage her to lift her head to see her own face, a constant fascination. Make sure she has toys to look at, too.

A large beach ball can also be used to teach this skill. Place the child on her tummy over the ball with her elbows placed under her shoulders. Use a rattly toy and, holding the toy in the same position, slowly roll the ball forward. Your child will need to lift her head higher to maintain eye contact with the toy.

Positioning, Carrying and Playing

As with all early Gross Motor skills, your handling and positioning of your baby are vital to her progress.

Continue to place your baby on her tummy, as described in the previous item.

Use the carrying positions described in the previous item to give her the opportunity to support her own head.

Try holding your baby on your lap, supporting her with both your hands around her shoulders. Gently tip her towards you — only a tiny way — and wait for her to bring her head back to look at you. You can then tip her (a tiny way, and slowly) to either side, and backwards. She should soon be able to keep her head in line with her body.

Fathers enjoy holding their babies on their chests when lying in bed in the mornings. It is very rewarding for the baby to see Dad's face so close when she lifts her head up. Hold her elbows on your chest, underneath her shoulders, to encourage her to use them to push.

Still allow her in her sleep and playtime to lie on either side, as the side neck muscles help her move her head forward, backward and to the side.

For very floppy babies, it is still helpful to keep them firmly wrapped, arms forward, knees bent up, for sleeps, nursing and carrying.

LIFTS HEAD FROM SHOULDER IN SIDE LYING

GM.A.3

This is the second place in which the head needs to be lifted against gravity.

How to Assess

Materials: A firm, flat surface.

Method: Place your child on her side, supporting her around the chest.

To score, first tilt your child up approximately 20° from the surface of the table and score *plus* if your child lifts her head vertically away from her lower shoulder and maintains for three seconds.

How to Teach

Roll the child onto one side and support her around her chest. Tilt her off the surface and talk to her from above and in front of her top shoulder, to encourage her to lift her head up and look at you. Repeat the same movement from the opposite side. You will probably find that she is stronger on one side than the other. If this is the case, do twice as many repeats on the weaker side.

Positioning, Carrying and Playing

Place the baby on her side for some of her awake time each day, remembering to alternate sides. Place a small pillow or rolled-up towel behind her to prevent her from rolling back, and place toys within swiping distance.

The side lying position can be used for some of her sleeps too, alternating with the tummy position.

Another good side lying position is to place your baby on her side in a firm beanbag. She must be able to see out. Do not use any one position for long periods of time.

Continue to carry your baby firmly wrapped in a bunny rug up over your shoulder so that she can bring her head back and around to see you. Alternatively, carry her in the crook of your arm, at a slight angle so that she must work to bring her head upright. Avoid carrying her cradled in your arms, flat on her back, as this position does not encourage her to use her muscles.

When your baby is sitting on your lap, tilt her as described in the previous item. Wait 5 or 10 seconds each time you tilt her, chatting and singing, to encourage her to bring her head back to a straight position.

Another fun way to help your child learn to control the muscles at the side of her neck is by helping her to roll from her side to her back.

Place the child on her side and, holding her legs, roll her onto her back so that she can see your face.

You might make it a peek-a-boo game, so that while she is on her side she can't see your face, but when she rolls onto her back, she can.

Repeat this about six times and then place her on her side again and wait for her to roll herself onto her back to see you.

If she finds this difficult to do, try placing her on a gently graded foam wedge so that she is rolling slightly downhill onto her back.

It is most important that you train yourself to pick your baby up, and place her back down again, so that she is being made to use her muscles in a way that will advantage her in the long term.

Every time you pick your baby up, roll her onto her side, hold her firmly around the upper arms and shoulders and gently lift her up. She will use the side neck muscles to control her head when you lift her. Remember to alternate sides.

This method also applies when you place her down again; first turn her onto her side and then place her down. Do not support her head.

If your child consistently finds it more difficult to lift her head to one side than the other, it is wise to contact your doctor or physiotherapist. Some simple exercises and carry positions are usually sufficient to correct this.

ATTEMPTS TO LIFT HEAD WHEN PULLED TO SIT FROM 45°

GM.A4

This is the third direction in which your child needs to control her head.

How to Assess

Method: Have your child leaning back (at about a 45° angle) on a firm surface, held by the hands. Pull her slowly to an upright sitting position.

Score *plus* if your child makes any attempt to lift her head into line with the rest of her body.

How to Teach

This skill may be very hard for floppy children to achieve and it will take many short practice sessions over many weeks for the baby to gain control over her head while the body is being lifted against gravity.

Always place your child so that you can maintain eye contact with her as you practise this skill. You may find this easiest if your child sits on a table while you sit on a chair or in the floor position mentioned in the Positioning, Carrying and Playing section.

Support the child firmly around the shoulders. Rounding them slightly forward will help her to control her head. Keep your index fingers out straight, behind her neck, so that if she suddenly loses control, your fingers will be there to prevent her head from tipping back. Maintaining eye contact and talking to her constantly, slowly lower her backwards a few degrees — hold it for five to eight seconds and then return her to the sitting position. It is most important that you should do this on an angle, first leaning her to one side, then to the other, as well as straight up and down.

Repeat this several times, constantly talking to her. When she can control her head consistently at this level, try lowering her back a little further — to a 45° angle. Continue to practise to whatever angle she can reliably maintain her head control.

Once you feel she can control her head when lowered from a sitting position to a 45° angle, then try pulling her up, starting at a 45° angle. Lean her back on pillows so that she is in a half-lying position at 45°, support her around the shoulders, rounding her shoulders forward with your hands. Then, using the direction that you decide on, either 'sit' or 'up', pull her slightly off the pillows and wait for her to attempt to lift her head, before you proceed.

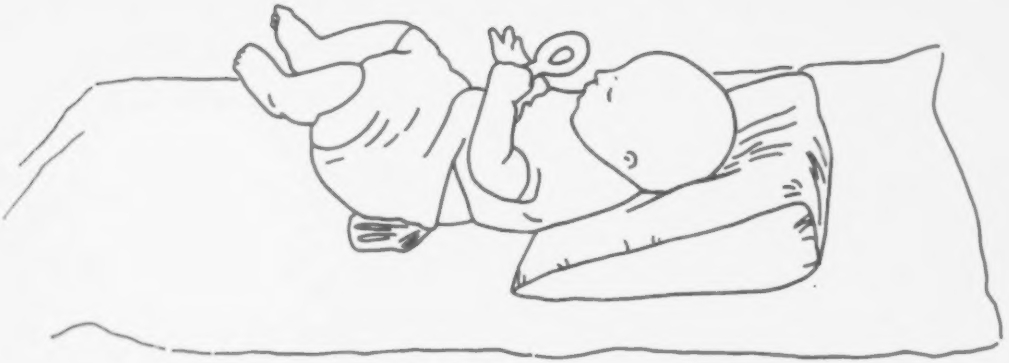
Positioning, Carrying and Playing

For short periods only, place your baby on her back, with toys suspended over her. This would be a good time to remove her nappy, so that she can kick without restriction. While your baby is on her back on the floor, it is wise to place a small pillow under her head, and a small pillow or folded nappy under her buttocks. This will ensure that her spine and pelvis are kept in a position that will prepare her for a good posture and 'normal' movement.

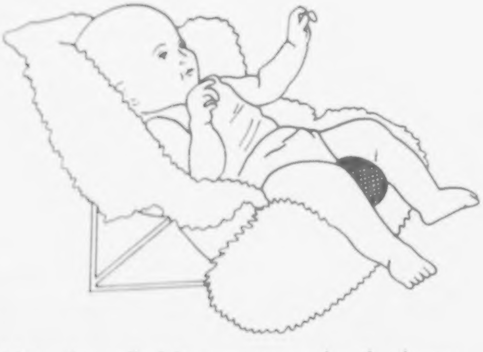
She can also spend short periods in a baby chair. It is important to tuck a nappy or a bunny rug under her knees and thighs to hold her pelvis in a good position and to encourage her tummy muscles to work. Again, suspend toys where she can see and reach for them.

When you are nursing her on your lap, chat to her and practise the skill of lowering her back to 45°, then encouraging her up again, all the time maintaining eye contact. Remember, tilt her back at an angle.

Sit on the floor, your back supported by a firm surface, and bend your knees so your thighs form a slope of about 45°. Place your baby on your thighs and again pull her up and lower her, supporting her around her shoulders, or if she can manage it, hold her upper arms or even her hands.



The baby can be left on her back for short periods



Note the rolled bunny rug under the knees

Continue carrying her with her arms forward, legs well bent, in the bunny rug in the crook of your arm; do not support her head. If you tilt her back very slightly, she will have to work to bring her head forward. Don't tip her so far that her head falls right back.

Continue to pick her up and place her down on her alternate sides.

ON TUMMY, LIFTS HEAD TO 90°, WEIGHT ON FOREARMS

GM.A.5

This skill combines the skills that the baby has been practising up until now and it will become a useful play position for the child.

How to Assess

Method: Place the child on her tummy on a firm surface.

Score *plus* if your child raises her head to 90° and maintains for five seconds.

How to Teach

Following on from GM.A.2, place a bright and interesting toy in front of the child so that she can see it easily, then raise it slightly off the floor to a position that requires her to lift her head higher and in doing so push on her forearms. Hold the toy in that position for a few seconds if she is watching it. If she stops looking at the toy when it gets higher, lower it slightly until she again can see it, then try to raise it again. Obviously it has to be a specially interesting toy to make her work so hard to keep it in sight. You may also practise this with her lying on her tummy on the table with your face level with her face. Don't expect her to reach 90° straight off — initially it will be 65°, then 70°, then 80°, but consistent practice will strengthen the back and neck muscles sufficiently to allow her to raise her head to 90°.

If you have a large beach ball, you can lay your baby on her tummy and support her at her hips, or if necessary her trunk, to help teach this skill. As you push the ball forward, she will tend to lift her head back. To add some incentive do this in front of a mirror, so she can see herself as she comes forward, or have a marvellous toy on a support in front of her, for her to look at. Maybe a brother or sister would enjoy helping with this exercise?

Positioning, Carrying and Playing

Your baby will be awake for more of the day now, so can be placed on her tummy on the floor for extended playtimes. Make sure you have a variety of toys around for her.

Some babies resist being on their tummies. If this happens, try placing her back over the wedge, or rolled bunny rug, as this makes the position easier for her. Each time you put her down, increase the length of time a little. Place her down at least three times a day on her tummy.

Continue to sleep her on a firm mattress on her tummy, for at least one of her sleeps. If this is not possible, sleep her on alternate sides.

As with GM.A.2, this skill can be practised in bed, lying on Dad's chest. Support her around her upper arms and talk to her while she is feeling weight through her forearms. You could also place her over your lap on the couch, encouraging her to look up to your voice.

To extend this skill, encourage your child to turn her head to look at you or to follow a moving object when she is supporting her head at 90°. It is important to practise this to both sides. If she turns more freely to one side than the other, position her so that she must turn to the weaker side to see what is going on.

It is important that you get used to 'rough and tumble' play with your baby from this early age. Within reason older children should not be discouraged from helping with her, and you should gently start introducing 'fun movement', for example, swinging in your arms, raspberries on her tummy, tickling her feet. If your baby can manage, she need no longer be firmly wrapped to be carried; however, this does require a greater effort on her part. Continue to carry with no support to her head, either over your shoulder or sitting in the crook of your arm. Make sure you hold her legs together when you carry her in this position. Support her as low on her chest as she can manage.

Try carrying your baby lying along your forearm, face down. Her head can rest on your hand or, if you face her in the other direction, in the crook of your arm. Once she is adept at lifting her head, you can support her with your hand under her chest.

You could begin to expect your baby to take some weight through her forearm and shoulder when you put her down. (This will apply only if your baby is no longer firmly wrapped.) Once again, turn her onto her side, supporting her around her chest and her hips. Lower her towards the surface, so positioned that her lower forearm will touch the surface first. Lean her on this arm for a few seconds, supporting her shoulder if necessary. Now rest her down onto her side, and then if you wish, turn her onto her tummy.

If you do this every time you put her down, you will be preparing her neck and shoulder girdle muscles for her future skills. Remember to alternate sides.

ON BACK, KEEPS HEAD IN MIDLINE WITH CHIN TUCK

GM.A.6

The baby now lies on her back with her head in the midline (an imaginary line running down the centre of her body from head to toe) rather than rolled to the right or left. Her chin should be tucked in. This chin tuck is very important. Until now, the baby has been pulling her head back, shortening her neck muscles at the back. To help stabilise herself, she was also hunching up her shoulders. Now, when she lies on her back she has enough control over her front neck muscles to pull her chin in.

If the baby does not learn to do this, it will influence the rest of her development, as she will always have to hunch her shoulders to help stabilise her head and neck. If she does not make progress with the methods described below, consult a physiotherapist. Note that this skill can be taught at the same time as the following skill in this sequence: GM.A.7.

How to Assess

Method: Place your child on her back.

Score *plus* if she lies with her head in the middle, without it rolling to either side, with her chin tucked in.

How to Teach

Lay your child lengthwise on your lap with her head cradled in your hands in the midline position. Gain eye contact and chat to her. Then try the same thing without supporting her head.

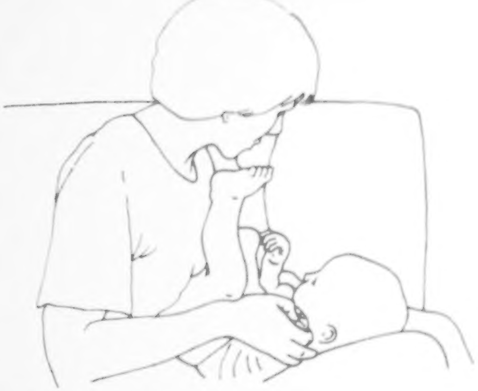
Practise on flat surfaces as well.

If your child has difficulty mastering this skill, revise the earlier exercises in this sequence, as these earlier skills are important steps leading up to mastering this skill.

Positioning, Carrying and Playing

Whenever you place your child down to change her, spend a short time practising this skill first.

A fun activity, in which the head is cradled in the midline, is 'having a swing'. Place your baby on a small blanket and, with one person at the baby's head end and another at her foot end, lift the blanket and swing the baby gently, while chatting to her or singing.



Helping the baby to relax her shoulder muscles

Family members should be encouraged to play with your baby, remembering to keep her head in the midline.

Your baby may not be able to manage this skill, because her neck muscles are a little tight, from the days when she hunched her shoulders to hold her head steady, or because she prefers lying with her head to one side.

This is easily overcome if you play with your baby lying on your lap, her head near your knees, bottom and legs curled up against your chest, head in midline. Now with your hands cupped over her shoulders, gently but firmly pull down on her shoulders, either alternately or both together. Encourage her to play with her feet while she is in this position, if necessary rounding her shoulders forward for her so she can reach them. It is best to take her opposite foot to the opposite hand.

This exercise should be continued until your baby can achieve a good chin tuck in sitting, and she no longer hunches her shoulders.

The way you have been picking up your baby, carrying her and lowering her down again has actually been helping her gain control over her neck muscles. Still continue with the same methods.

ON BACK, BRINGS HANDS TOGETHER ON CHEST

GM.A.7

With the baby gaining control of her head in the midline comes the ability to bring her hands together on her chest. This skill is important to the child's ability to play.

How to Assess

Method: Place the child on her back on a firm surface. If she enjoys grasping objects, give her a toy to play with.

Score *plus* if your child lies with her head in the midline and her chin tucked in, as described in the previous item, and keeps her hands together at chest level.

How to Teach

This skill can be taught while you practise the midline skills in GM.A.6.

While you have your child cradled on your lap, as described in the previous item, offer her a toy, fairly close to her chest, and wait for her to bring her hands forward to grasp it.

Alternatively, place her on a firm pillow, put your hands behind her shoulders and help her to lift her shoulders and arms forward. While both your hands are occupied, you may find it easier to help her reach towards your face.

Next, try assisting just one arm and wait for her to bring the other arm forward herself.

Gradually reduce your help as she gains more control.

Positioning, Carrying and Playing

You can help your child to bring her hands forward in almost every position in which you place or carry her.

Be aware of all the things you can help her to touch and feel — your face and hair, toys, your breast or the bottle at feed times, your clothing and of course her own clothes, body and hands.

PULLED TO SIT, ONLY SLIGHT HEAD LAG

GM.A.8

Every time we sit up from lying, we need to be able to lift the weight of our head using our neck muscles. A baby's head is very large in proportion to the rest of her body and it is hard work for her to keep it in line with her body when pulled to sit.

How to Assess

Method: Place the child on her back on a flat surface and pull her to sit, holding her hands and wrists.

Score *plus* if your child can lift and hold her head in line with her body with only a momentary lag at the start of the movement. She may come up with her head tilting to one side. This is acceptable at this stage.

How to Teach

At this stage you have had a lot of practice as described in GM.A.7. It is important now that you give your child adequate warning of what you are going to do. Use a consistent word such as 'sit' or 'up'. After you have given this direction, hold her wrists and wait for several seconds before you start to lift her — giving her a chance to help.

Also practise going down to a lying position from a sitting position. Hold her wrists and slowly lower her, pausing just before she reaches the floor to make her work just that extra bit before she relaxes.

Positioning, Carrying and Playing

Games such as 'Row, row, row your boat' — each time leaning just a little further back — can be enjoyed by all the family. This is best done building in a 'twist' as you go back and forth.

As your baby gains more control over her head, you may be tempted to carry her with her legs apart over your hip. Don't — unless you have been advised to do so by a physiotherapist or doctor. Babies with lower tone all too often use legs wide apart to stabilise themselves. This prevents them from learning to use their trunk muscles effectively when they get to sitting, and stops them moving from sitting to crawling and kneeling positions. It is essential that low-toned children learn to use their trunk muscles for balance.

Continue to carry your baby in the crook of your arm, with your support as low down her trunk as possible.

While you are carrying your baby in this way, rotate her legs towards you so that her body is twisted slightly. This rotation or twist is going to become extremely important in all the baby's movement. It is an integral part of balance.

Continue to pick up and put down in side lying. Your child need not of course continue to lie on her side. From here, help her into the desired position.

HELD IN SITTING, HOLDS HEAD UP, CHIN JUTTING

GM.A.9

This is a combination of all the head control movements and is necessary before any further sitting skills are attempted.

At this stage, the child has not learned to tuck her chin in when sitting, as she does when lying on her back.

How to Assess

Method: Support your child in sitting, holding her firmly around her chest or shoulders.

Score *plus* if your child holds her head steady for five seconds. Her chin will still jut forward at this stage, but it should not bob forward or to the side.

How to Teach

This is an excellent skill to combine with language learning. Make sure the child is in constant eye contact with you — your eyes at the same level as hers. Initially, it is important to hold her around the shoulders with your fingers extended behind her neck, to prevent her head flipping back if she loses control.

While talking to her, move from side to side, slowly and only slightly at first. If her head wobbles too much, come back to centre front and wait until she gains control again. Only when she can maintain control, turning about 45° to each side while you're talking to her, should you remove your support from around her shoulders and move down to holding her around the chest.

Your child needs opportunities to practise this skill frequently, for short periods, so make a habit of practising after each nappy change or whenever you sit with her on your lap.

HELD IN STANDING, BEARS SOME WEIGHT

GM.A.10

It is important for the normal development of a deep hip socket for a child to put weight through her legs from an early age. Failure to do so will result in a shallow bony socket for the hip bone, which will allow the hip to dislocate too easily as the child grows taller and heavier.

Standing will also help to build up muscle tone and to ensure the correct length of your baby's muscles.

A child who is not stood early enough will sometimes resist putting her feet to the ground later. Standing her now helps to prepare her for more advanced standing exercises.

How to Assess

Method: Hold your child well supported around her chest with her feet flat on a firm surface.

Score *plus* if she pushes up on her feet momentarily against the firm surface. At this stage her legs may be apart, her knees stiff and her hips bent back behind her shoulders.

How to Teach

If your child is very stiff in the legs you should check with a therapist before attempting this.

We also suggest that you seek advice from a therapist if your child is very floppy, as bracing of the knees may be needed. If such advice is not available, and if your child is at least five months old, you could try the following techniques to keep your child's legs straight in the standing position.

Wrap offcuts of carpet around your child's legs and bind them with crepe bandages or secure with Velcro. Or cut out pieces of cardboard and wrap them around with crepe bandages. Children's soccer shin pads cut to size and secured with Velcro or crepe bandages can also be used.

These 'braces' or 'splints' should extend well up the leg, and down to the ankle. If they are not long enough, the child will be able to bend her knees. You may need to pad the top and bottom of the splints.

It is worth persevering for up to a few months with these braces or splints if your child has low tone, as her ability to stand will definitely improve with practice.

Of course, not all children are very stiff or very floppy, and many need no encouragement to push up on their feet. If your child enjoys it, let her stand as often as she wishes. Let her stand on your lap as you play language games with her.

ON TUMMY, BEARS WEIGHT ON FOREARMS, WITH ELBOWS IN FRONT OF SHOULDERS AND CHIN TUCKED

GM.A.11

Learning to take body weight on the forearms is very important. The neck and shoulder girdle muscles must all work together to hold this position, and it is these same muscles working as a team that hold the shoulder girdle and neck steady when the child uses her hands for her Fine Motor skills. She will also need a stable shoulder girdle when she starts to sit, crawl, cruise around furniture and so on.

How to Assess

Method: Place the child on her tummy, her forearms on the floor under her shoulders.

Score *plus* if your child pushes up on her forearms and adjusts her posture so that her elbows are forward of her shoulders. Her head should be held at 90° and her chin tucked in.

How to Teach

Your child should by now have had plenty of practice at bearing her weight with her forearms under her shoulders. If she is having difficulty with this, look back to GM.A.5.

Now she needs to learn to prop with her arms well forward. If she cannot keep them there herself, place a rolled towel under her arms. Use toys to keep her interested, or place her so that she can watch the general family activity.

As soon as she is accustomed to playing in this position, it is important to remove the towel.

Positioning, Carrying and Playing

As well as putting your baby on the floor to play, in the position described above, you can place her over your thigh as you sit on the floor, or place her on your chest, ensuring that her arms are well forward. Encourage her to push up on her elbows by singing, talking, blowing on her hair and so on.

Babies enjoy rubbing their feet together — exploring one foot with the other. If your child does not do this, take her feet, while she lies on her tummy, and rub them together for her. This is important as a preparation for standing and it helps the baby learn about her own body.

Continue to carry your baby as described in GM.A.8. Make sure that your baby's arms are well forward and not caught back behind her.

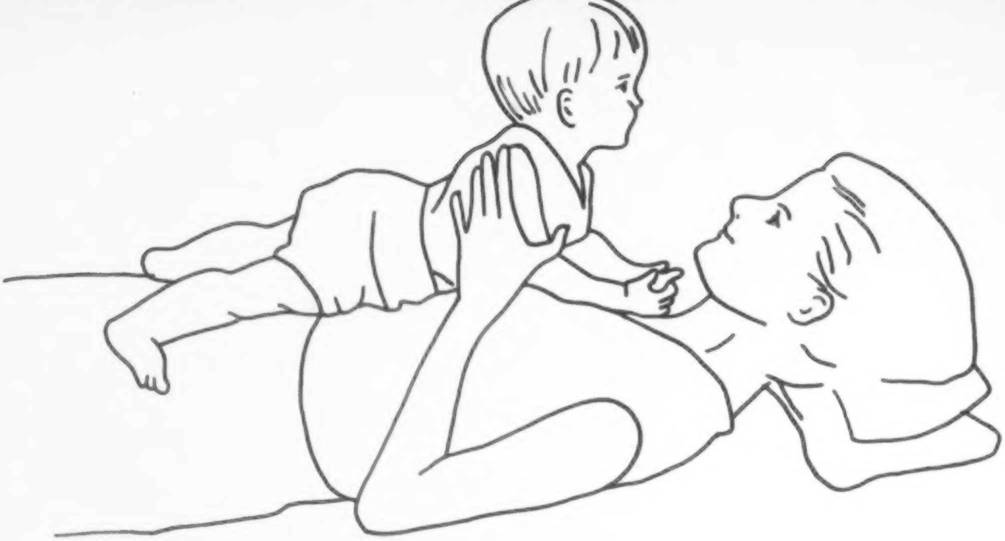
You could now introduce a new 'put down' position. Once again, turn your baby onto her side, but this time, supported around her chest and hips, leaving her arms free. As you approach the surface, twist her forward very slightly, so her arms have a chance to come in contact with the surface first. If she will, let her take some weight through her arms, then continue to place her down onto her side.

This method of putting her down is in preparation for all her floor play and crawling.

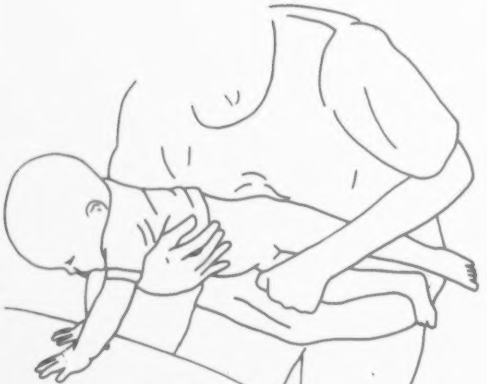
Alternate this method with the 'put down' in GM.A.5.

When you pick your baby up, again roll her to the side, then prop up on her forearm, so she is in a half-lying position. Support her bottom and shoulder if she needs it. Leave her in this position for a few seconds, then continue to pick her up. Take her straight up into the crook of your arm, as described in GM.A.8.

This side lying position, supported on her forearm, is a wonderful position to place your baby in during the day. While you have her on your lap, support her in this position. You could sit on the floor, with her leaning against your thigh, again



A good way to encourage the baby to push up on her elbows



Here the baby is being put down onto straight arms. If your baby cannot manage this, put her down onto her forearms

in this half-lying position. If she is tired, she can lean against you, rather than on her forearm.

If you can train yourself to ALWAYS have her 'off centre' now, you will find she will very easily pass from one skill to the next.

Remember to alternate sides.

ON TUMMY, LEGS NOT ALWAYS FROGGED, RANDOM KICKING

GM.A.12

This is an important progression, clearing the way for further development of movement.

Keeping the legs in a wide-apart position can become a habit affecting the child's ability to crawl, balance and eventually walk, run and climb with a normal gait. Because it interferes with correct balance responses, a wide-apart gait can contribute to a fear of movement. This problem can easily be avoided by discouraging the child from keeping her legs apart — starting now!

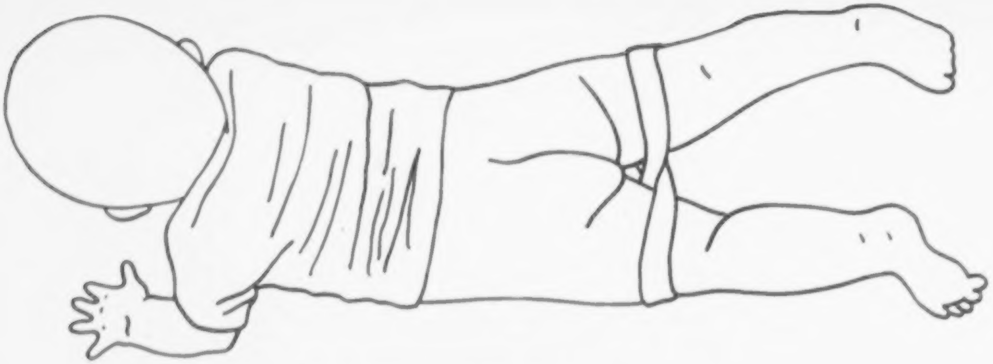
How to Assess

Method: Place the child on her tummy on the floor.

Score *plus* if she lies with her legs in a variety of positions, no longer consistently in a frogged position, with knees turned out. She should bend and straighten her knees, one at a time, perhaps rubbing her straight leg with the other foot. Her legs should be closer together for much of the time.

How to Teach

From now on, NEVER let your child lie with her legs apart. If necessary, keep her legs together in



Using a headband to keep legs together

one of the following ways:

- Sew together two tennis wristbands. Place this on the child's thighs.
- Wind a tennis headband twice around one thigh, then twist it and wind it once around the other thigh.
- Pull one leg of a pair of pantihose up the child's legs, so she has it encasing her from her knees to her waist (mermaid position).
- Sew together the legs of a pair of loose-fitting overalls.

Such devices will not hinder your child's movements. Children at risk of developing a wide gait can wear them all day — while sitting, crawling, pulling to stand and walking.

Positioning, Carrying and Playing

Keep your child's legs together whenever she is on her tummy, on her side or supported in a sitting position (for example, in a car seat).

Always carry her with her legs together; NEVER carry her with her legs apart over your hip.

If your child has stiff legs, it is advisable to consult a therapist.

Continue to carry, pick up and put down and position as described in GM.A.11.

ON BACK, PLAYS WITH ARMS HELD UP AND AWAY FROM BODY

GM.A.13

The child's ability to play is greatly enhanced once she is able to reach her arms up, away from her body.

How to Assess

Method: Place your child on her back. Offer her an interesting toy or lean your face towards her. Encourage her to reach for the toy or your face.

Score *plus* if your child reaches up towards the toy with both hands. She need not succeed in touching it. Her arms must be stretched out from her body, but not necessarily together.

How to Teach

If your child is unable to reach forward, place your fingers behind her shoulders and round them forward off the surface for her.

Next, help just one arm to come forward and wait for her to lift the other arm herself. Alternate the side you help.

Finally, encourage her to lift both arms herself. Always give her plenty of time to respond, as it may take her a little while to get organised.

Positioning, Carrying and Playing

Never leave your child on her back without interesting toys to reach for. Remember to position her as described in GM.A.4.

Each time you go to pick her up, encourage her to raise her arms towards you first, using a consistent direction such as 'up'.

Hang something interesting over the nappy change table, within your child's reach. Change the toy often, to maintain interest.

Place your baby in a baby seat for short periods during the day. Hang toys near by for her to reach. Remember the rolled bunny rug under her knees.

Remember carrying, pick up and put down, and nursing positions.

ON BACK, BRINGS HANDS TO KNEES

GM.A.14

This exercise helps to strengthen the baby's tummy muscles and helps her pelvis to 'sit' at the right angle, thus preparing her for future skills.

It is also another step in body exploration and increasing body awareness.

How to Assess

Method: Observe your child as she lies on her back.

Score *plus* if she brings her hands to her knees, lifting her buttocks slightly off the surface as she raises her knees.

How to Teach

Place the child on her back, and, holding her at her thighs, roll her knees up towards her chest.

Again, with your child on her back, roll her so that her feet are within her reach, over her chest. Do this too, with one foot at a time, taking it to the opposite hand.

Place your baby on her side, bend her knees and help her to find her knees with her hands.

Positioning, Carrying and Playing

Place your baby on her back as described in GM.A.4, at times when you can supervise her. If possible, remove her nappy so that it is easier for her to move her legs. Watch to see that she is being active. If not, change her to another position.

Put her down to play on her side too. In this position she can easily see her hands and knees.

Play games of peek-a-boo, rolling her knees up so that she can't see your face. This is fun at nappy changing time!

Help her to play with her opposite foot when she sits on your lap.

Tickle her tummy at nappy change and bath times, to stimulate her to tighten her tummy muscles.

When your child is older, she will be able to take her feet right up to her mouth!

ON BACK, ROLLS TO SIDE

GM.A.15

The baby rolls from her back to her side in one of two ways. When she brings her hands to her knees, she rolls over to her side. When she turns her head well around, the rest of her body follows.

How to Assess

Method: Place the child on her back, then stand to one side and call. Or call her when she is playing with her hands at her knees, as in GM.A.14.

Score *plus* if your child rolls to the side.

How to Teach

Place your baby on her back and bend her knees up for her. Now place your head down on the surface next to hers and call her. Once she has turned her head, help her to roll the rest of the way, guiding her from her hips.

Positioning, Carrying and Playing

Place your child on her back, with all her toys to the side, or position her so that she must turn her head (and hence, roll) to watch the family activity.

If she finds rolling difficult, place her on a wedge or make a small slope out of a covered board. The slope will help her to roll.

Another method is to hold her around her knees and roll her over (you cross your arms).

PULLED TO SIT, KEEPS HEAD IN LINE WITH BODY

GM.A.16

The muscles at the front and back of the neck must work together equally for the baby to perform this skill. All the pick up and put down handling techniques have been preparing your baby for this.

How to Assess

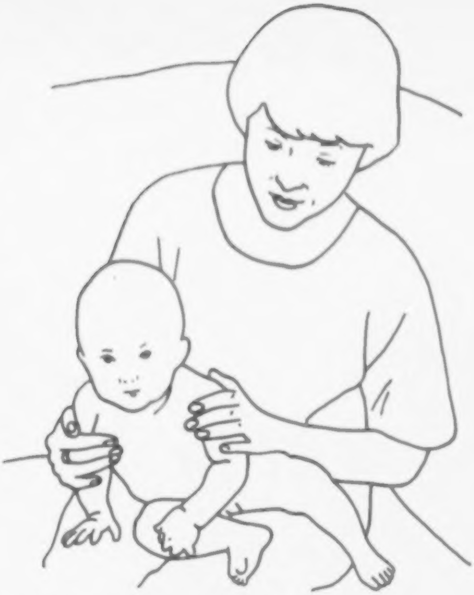
Method: Place your child on her back. Hold her wrists and slowly pull her up to sitting.

Score *plus* if your child lifts her head and holds it steady as soon as her head leaves the surface. It is acceptable for her to hunch her shoulders to help with this movement.

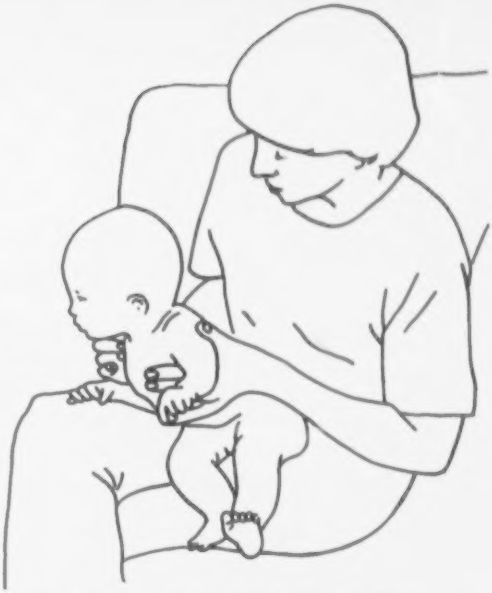
How to Teach

Continuing on from GM.A.8, frequent practice will eventually result in success. Don't forget to:

- Get eye contact before you start.
- Always give a consistent direction.
- Move slowly to allow your child to maintain control.
- Practise going from sitting to lying as well as from lying to sitting.
- Stop at various stages of the movement and talk to her, to make her work even harder!



Sitting the baby off centre



Here the baby is propped on her forearm

Positioning, Carrying and Playing

While concentrating on this skill, don't neglect your child's development on her tummy. At this stage she needs some time each day on her tummy, back and sides. Never leave her on her back if she is sleepy or inactive.

Continue to carry her in the crook of your arm, as described in GM.A.8, supporting her as low on her trunk as she can manage.

You can exercise with your child! Lie on your back, with your child sitting on your tummy. Now sit up and let the child lie back. When you lie back, your child will be pulled to sitting.

For the older delayed child, place a small toy or ball of yarn under her chin. Encourage her to keep it there while you pull her to sit.

Once your child controls her head well when pulled to sit, try doing it with her body slightly twisted. This will prepare her for the more sophisticated skills she is working towards, where rotation of the trunk is so important.

PULLED TO SIT THROUGH SIDE LYING, HOLDS HEAD STEADY

GM.A.17

This is the completion of head control in the side lying position, begun in GM.A.3.

How to Assess

Method: Place your child on her back, holding one wrist and the thigh on the same side (to stabilise her during the movement). Roll her to the side away from the hand you are holding and pull her to sit.

Score *plus* if your child's head is held off her lower shoulder and steady throughout the movement.

How to Teach

This is a natural progression from GM.A.3. If you have been practising lifting your child from the side lying position and nursing her in the side lying position, you will find that this task follows on quite easily.

You may start with the child propped on pillows to a 45° angle and lift her from there. Once her head is steady from this position, gradually lower the pillows, staying at whichever level you need to, until her head is quite steady throughout the movement. Finally, practise from the lying position; the start of the movement should be very slow initially to allow her time to organise herself. As with all movement, it is most useful to have a one-word direction to describe the task so that she knows what you want her to do.

Make sure you practise equally to both sides, although if you find that one side is not as strong as the other, as is often the case, do more repetitions on the weak side.

Positioning, Carrying and Playing

It is most important that your child learns to play on her side. This position is particularly good for preparing her muscles for many of her future skills, and throughout Sequence GM.A this position will be used in a variety of ways.

Give your child plenty of time to play on her side, with toys within reach, so that she has opportunities to exercise her neck and trunk muscles as she plays. You may need to place something behind her so that she does not roll back, or support her in a semi-lying position.

When your child is sitting on your lap, sit her off centre, leaning her to one side. Help her place a supporting arm on your thigh, bracing it for her at the elbow.

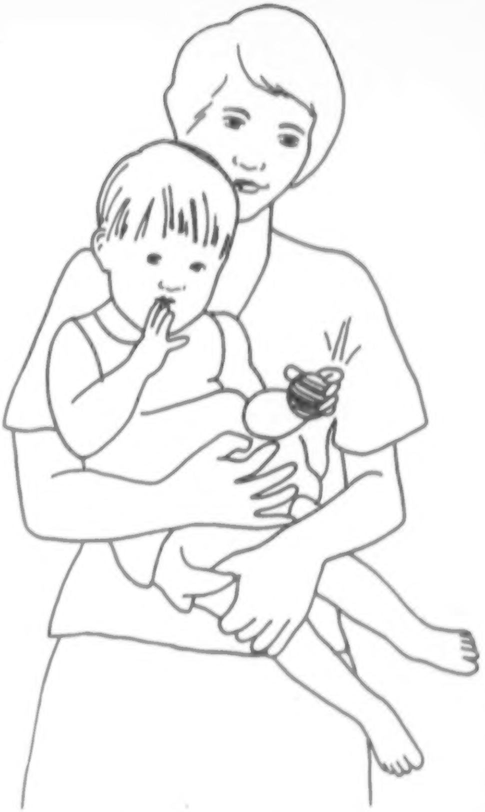
An alternative to leaning on a straight arm is to have her semi-lying propped on her forearm. If necessary, brace her shoulder with your hand.

This is a most important position, and it is worth teaching anyone who nurses your baby to do it this way.

Once your child is happy in this off-centre position, it is important that she be introduced to another new position. Position her as above, with her supporting arm straight or bent, and now take her top leg and place it so that her ankles cross, 'knee to the sky'. This position is most important and it is worthwhile mastering. It is from variations of this position that your baby will learn to get in and out of crawl, sitting and standing!

Once your child has mastered this skill, you can start to encourage her to push up on her own hands as she comes up from side lying. Support your child on her top hip and under her chest. Rotate her so that both arms can reach the floor or table in front of her body and encourage her to push up. Give her as much assistance as she needs by pushing down firmly on her hip to help her up into sitting and by guiding her under her chest. Later you will need minimal guidance on her hip and she will do the rest. It is important to work to both sides with this exercise. It is also important to let your child 'rest' halfway up, so she learns to control the position.

At this stage, you can also start a new way of carrying your child. Hold her in front of you, facing away from you. Bring her back so that her bottom, legs and trunk are straight up and down against your chest. Now tilt her slightly, so that she has to correct her head position to remain upright. With practice, this becomes a very easy way to carry your child — you will find that you can do it with one arm. Don't forget to alternate sides.



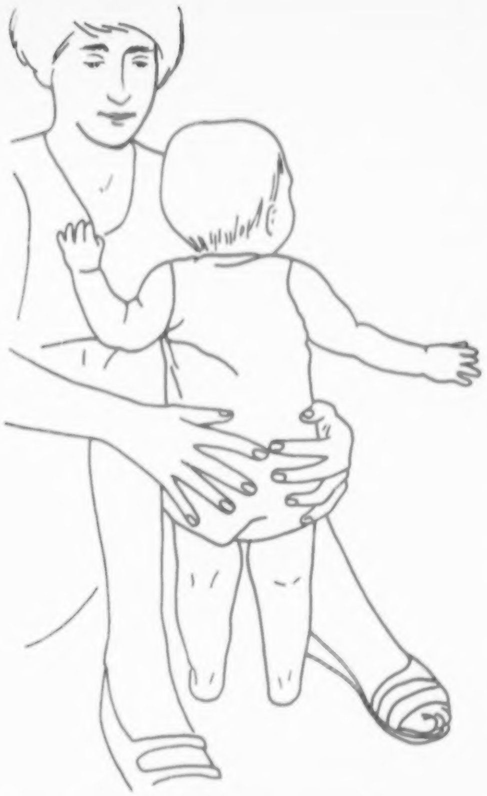
A new way to carry the child

This would be a good time to start using a back-pack for some of your carrying. Check that your baby's legs are not too wide apart if using a back-pack.

SITTING, HOLDS HEAD STEADY, WITH CHIN TUCK

GM.A.18

When the child sits with her head steady and her chin tucked in (rather than jutting out) it shows that her front and back neck muscles are working in unison. This head position is important for feeding and the development of speech.



A good position for practising standing

How to Assess

Method: Place your child in a sitting position, supporting her low around her trunk.

Score *plus* if your child can hold her head steady and her chin is tucked in.

How to Teach

This exercise follows on from all the work on head control that you have been doing up until now.

Sit your child on your lap and gently and slowly tip her back, and then up again. Now tip her to one side, and back, to the other side, and back, and lastly, tip her forward.

Your child should be able to hold her head in line with her trunk. Move slowly so that she has time to correct her head on each tilt.

It is important that your child should have her chin tucked in while sitting. If she still juts her chin out, do some extra practice of the 'pull to sit' exercises described in GM.A.8 and 16. It is also important to make sure she is not 'hunching her shoulders' — refer to GM.A.6.

Positioning, Carrying and Playing

Although it is tempting to place the child in a supported sitting position, such as in a baby chair, it is best to alternate this with playing on the floor, where she is able to practise her movement skills. Continue to carry her so that she must support her own head and upper trunk, with a 'twist' built in, and use the time that she spends on your lap as exercise time, while you talk to her or play with her.

STANDING, TAKES MOST WEIGHT AND CONTROLS HEAD AND UPPER TRUNK

GM.A.19

This is a continuation from GM.A.10. You might like to re-read that item now.

How to Assess

Method: Place the child in standing, supporting her around her upper trunk.

Score *plus* if she maintains the standing position. She should take most of her own weight and should control her head and upper trunk, so that she no longer feels as though she might slip through your hands.

How to Teach

A good position to stand your child is as shown. Here you can control the position of her feet and hips while you chat with her. It is most important that she stand with her bottom in, that is, her hips must be in line with the rest of her body. She must also stand with her feet together, so place them inside your feet.

If she keeps collapsing her knees you may need to use splints or braces. Refer to GM.A.10 for some suggestions, but if in doubt, consult your therapist.

Once you feel confident about your child's standing, gently and slowly rock her just a few degrees to each side. This will help her to learn to bear weight through one leg at a time — important preparation for cruising around furniture and walking.

As your child gains control of her trunk, shoulder girdle and hips in standing against you, you will find that you can support her by the hands as she stands. Refer now to GM.A.36.

ON TUMMY, TAKES WEIGHT ON EXTENDED ARMS

GM.A.20

This is an important step towards crawling. Until the child has sufficient strength to be able to push up on straight arms from her tummy, she will not be able to crawl. This skill also contributes to the child's ability to sit for any length of time. It is important for her Fine Motor development, as well, as she needs a stable shoulder girdle to reach.

How to Assess

Method: Place your child on her tummy and rattle a toy above and in front of her head.

Score *plus* if your child pushes up on her hands until her elbows are straight, and maintains this position for five seconds. Her chin must be tucked in.

How to Teach

There are several ways in which you can encourage your child to prop on straight arms.

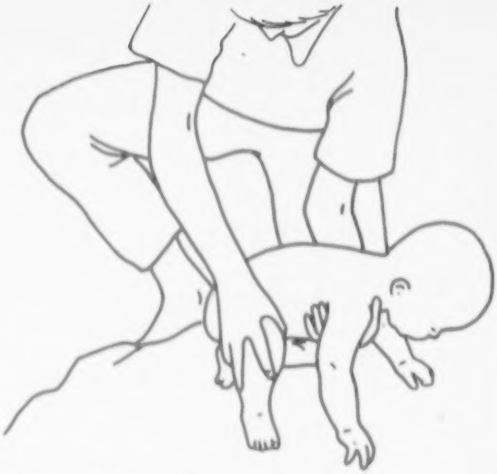
Lay her on a large beach ball with her arms stretched out in front of her. Holding her legs at the hips, knees or ankles roll her forward until her hands reach the ground (or, if it's easier, a low coffee table or box). Lean her weight onto her hands and gently twist her hips so she takes her weight through alternate arms.

Try kneeling and sitting back on your heels with your baby on her tummy down your thighs with her hands on the floor. Holding her at her hips or thighs, lean her forward onto her hands. Gently twist her hips from side to side, so she takes her weight on one side then the other.

If you find it difficult to keep your child's elbows straight, you may need to bandage a piece of cardboard around her arms, to act as a support. Your therapist may make you a back-slab to bandage on, instead of cardboard. If you use these supports, practise occasionally without them, so that your child does not become dependent on them.

Positioning, Carrying and Playing

Once again, your pick up and put down positions are most important. The 'put down' described below incorporates taking weight on straight arms, along with a twist in the trunk (essential for all future balance) and the 'knee to the sky' position, which your baby will use to get into and out of crawling. If you can train yourself to consistently use this method for the next few months, you will find you are preparing your baby well for all her crawling, pull to stand and early walking activities.



Putting the baby down onto two straight arms and one foot

You have already been placing your baby down on her arms — incorporating a twist (GM.A.5, 11). Now, put your baby down onto two straight arms and one foot, with the 'knee to the sky' (see note below). From here, gradually lower her onto her other thigh. You can make this harder for her by leaving her longer in the 'midway' position. If possible, leave her to get herself down onto her tummy, otherwise, help her down.

Leave your child to play in the side sitting/side lying position, with crisscross ankles, top knee to the sky, leaning on her arms. You could have her supported by furniture, such as a beanbag. Continue to nurse your child as described in GM.A.17.

Pick your child up, and continue to carry her in this side position (GM.A.17) — remember the twist!

'Knee to the sky'

The 'knee to the sky' position means that in either a sitting or lying position one foot is flat on the surface and the knee of that leg is then pointing up or 'to the sky'. It is essential that the foot is flat on the surface in this position. The ankles will usually be crossed and the child will lean to one side. This is an essential off-centre position which helps in the valuable rotation or twisting action.

ON TUMMY, WEIGHT ON FOREARMS, REACHES FOR A TOY

GM.A.21

This is a balance skill, necessary before the child can play efficiently on her tummy.

As the child reaches forward for a toy, the side she takes her weight on becomes slightly longer. Get down on the floor and try this for yourself! It is important to recognise this muscle lengthening, as it applies to all our movement and is a vital part of balancing. What happens is that your spine bends sideways, with the side you are leaning on becoming the long side. If this does not happen, proper balance cannot develop, movement looks ungainly and excessive caution about movement may develop.

How to Assess

Method: Place your child on her tummy on a firm surface with attractive toys placed 15 cm away from her head.

Score *plus* if your child transfers her weight to one side, leaning on one elbow, and reaches out to grasp a toy with the other hand.

How to Teach

At first you may need to help your child to balance on the supporting elbow, so that she does not become too frustrated in her attempts.

Place your child on her tummy, resting on her elbows, with an interesting toy placed slightly in front and to the side of her head. From behind (you may find it easiest to kneel, straddling the child) lean her weight over onto the supporting elbow, by placing your hand under her reaching arm almost in the armpit. Ensure that the weight-bearing side remains 'long', while the reaching side is very slightly concave. Support the elbow she is leaning on by gripping her upper arm. Then change sides.

Repeat this often, so that your child becomes familiar with the movement.

Next, start to stretch out the reaching hand to touch the toy, after you have transferred her weight to the supporting elbow. Gradually lessen your support and assistance to the reaching hand but maintain your support of the elbow on which she is leaning. Try to make sure that her efforts to touch the toy don't become so enthusiastic that she leans too far onto her elbow and overbalances, thus progressing to the next skill — rolling onto her back.

An excellent toy to use for this skill is a weighted toy that chimes or rattles when touched and swings back again to the upright position. Such toys are very rewarding as they only need to be touched slightly to create an effect and they will not roll away.

Positioning, Carrying and Playing

Once again, the 'side lying, crisscross ankles, knee to the sky' is an excellent background position for this skill. It teaches the child to balance while taking weight on one side of the body and at the same time reaching out with her other arm. (Note that this position also encourages the side taking the weight to be 'longer'.)

Continue to pick up, put down and carry as for GM.A.20 and to sit her on your lap as explained in GM.A.17.

ON TUMMY, ACCIDENTALLY ROLLS TO BACK

GM.A.22

Rolling is a baby's first means of locomotion and therefore a very important skill and very rewarding for the child. It should mainly be used as a positional change to allow her to play more freely with her hands or to be able to see better.

How to Assess

Method: Observe your child while she is playing on her tummy on a firm surface.

Score *plus* if she accidentally rolls onto her back in an attempt to see something or to play with a toy.

How to Teach

This is a continuation of GM.A.15. It happens at this stage by accident when the child pushes up on her hands, slightly unevenly, and overbalances, rolling onto her back. This sudden unexpected movement may frighten the child and make her wary of pushing up so high on her hands again, so quickly reassure her and praise her for rolling over.

To help her to gain control over her rolling, guide her from her legs, slowly, so that she doesn't lose control of her head at the end of the movement. Say 'roll over' each time you do it.

Next, place her on her tummy and encourage her to roll by herself, using your direction and an exciting toy to tempt her. If she tries but doesn't quite succeed, help her to finish the movement.

Practise this skill when you are dressing your child and when she is playing on the floor.

Positioning, Carrying and Playing

Your child may become so adept at rolling that she flips over onto her back as soon as you place her on her tummy. She may do this because it is easier for her to see around when on her back, so make sure that she has a variety of interesting things to look at when you want her to be on her tummy — and this should still be a lot of the time.

ON BACK, REACHES OUT WITH STRAIGHT ARMS, HANDS TOGETHER

GM.A.23

The baby is now better able to control her reaching out against gravity. She can fully straighten her arms and can reach with her wrist and fingers bent back. She can now reach forward with her arms closer together, due to her increased control over her shoulder girdle.

How to Assess

Method: While your child is lying on her back, encourage her to reach out for a toy or your face.

Score *plus* if your child reaches out with both arms straight, hands and fingers bent back, and arms and therefore hands close together.

How to Teach

Practice is the key to achieving this skill. Stay with your child as much as possible when she is playing on her back and use the techniques described in GM.A.13 to help her if necessary.

Positioning, Carrying and Playing

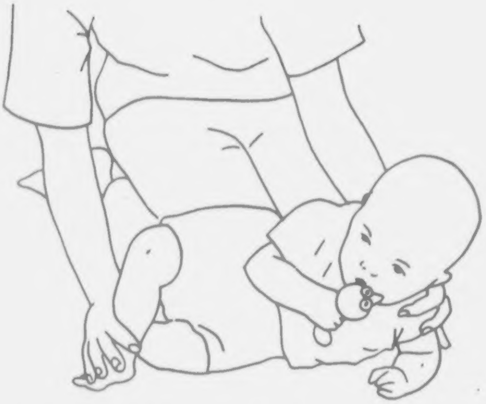
Babies love games in which Mummy or Daddy takes their hands and blows raspberries on them, or kisses them, or pretends to bite them. Such games are not only great fun — they are also important in teaching new sensations. You can play these games when your baby is lying, sitting on your lap or being carried.

Make sure that your baby's arms are straight when you bring her hands to your face.

ON BACK, ROLLS TO SIDE, REMAINING ON SIDE TO PLAY

GM.A.24

From this stage on, the baby spends more and more time playing on her side. As she gets better at it, she starts to play propped on the side and will use variations of this position for months to come.



Ankles crossed, knee to the sky — in a side lying position

In rolling to her side and playing there, the baby starts to use her legs separately. You will notice that she bends her top leg up in front of her.

How to Assess

Method: Place your child on her back. With toys, and your face and voice, encourage her to roll to her side.

Score *plus* if your child rolls, lifting her head away from the surface. She should then lie with the top leg bent up in front of her, separated from the other leg.

How to Teach

Guide your child to roll, if necessary, as described in GM.A.15. Then encourage her to play in the side position, guiding her to keep her top leg bent up, and her ankles crossed.

If your child has difficulty controlling her head during the roll, give more practice in the head control exercises earlier in this sequence.

From now on, it will be of great benefit to your child if you can always think 'ANKLES CROSSED, one knee to the sky'. This is because in this position the baby's pelvis and her muscles are set up for all future movement. It automatically means the baby will be using that all-important rotation that ensures quality in all movement.

You will most probably already have been doing this, as described in GM.A.11, 17, 20 and 21.

SITS UNSUPPORTED FOR ONE MINUTE

GM.A.25

When she first sits by herself, the baby leans forward on bent hips with a wide base of support. She either props herself with her arms forward or braces herself up and back with her arms held bent in a high 'W' position in line with her shoulders.

She is not yet able to use her hands for play while sitting, as she needs them for support.

How to Assess

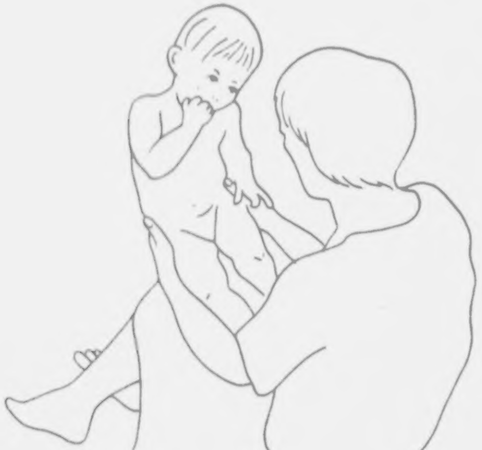
Method. Place your child in a sitting position on the floor, without support.

Score *plus* if she maintains this position for one minute.

How to Teach

Several techniques can be used to teach the child to sit. Sit your child on top of a large beach ball and hold her hands on her knees, legs together. Slowly roll the ball from side to side and forward and backward.

At the extreme of each position she should tilt her head, shoulders and trunk back towards the midline. Try tilting her back at an angle, so that she also has to bring one shoulder forward to help correct her balance.



Tilting the baby off balance

Next, sit your child, legs together, on your knees, holding her firmly around the hips. If she continually falls forward towards you, turn her around so that she is facing away from you. Slowly raise one knee slightly to tip her to one side — wait for her to tilt back to the middle. If she doesn't attempt to pull back to the middle, raise your knee a little higher so that she really feels as if she will fall if she doesn't tilt back. If she still makes no attempt to straighten up, then use the hand on the side to which you're tilting her to tap her back to the midline from the lower shoulder. You can see once more that the weight-bearing side is the longer side.

This can also be done with you sitting on the floor with your legs out straight or bent. Sit the child on your thighs or knees and slowly raise each thigh alternately to tilt her off balance.

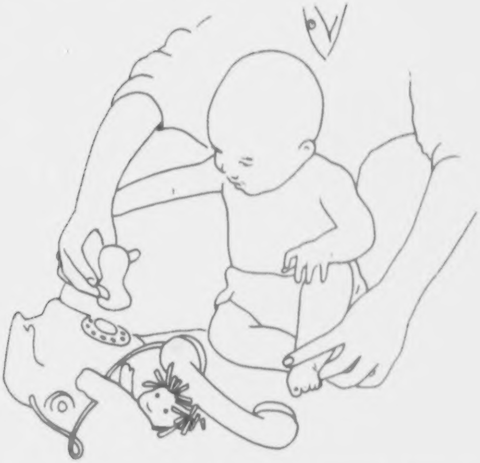
In each of these positions, also practise trunk balance reactions in a forward, backward and diagonal plane. Tilt the child forward, but at an angle, and wait for her to tip her head back and pull her shoulders and arms back to regain the upright position. When tilted back and at an angle, she should bend her head forward, chin to chest, and round her shoulders and arms forward, bending at the waist, bringing one shoulder forward of the other. These movements are automatic when sitting is fully established.

Continue to sit your child unsupported on the floor, as described under How to Assess, so that you can see how the exercises are improving your child's balance in sitting. Keep up the balancing exercises above until your child can right herself quickly, whenever she needs to, to prevent a fall.

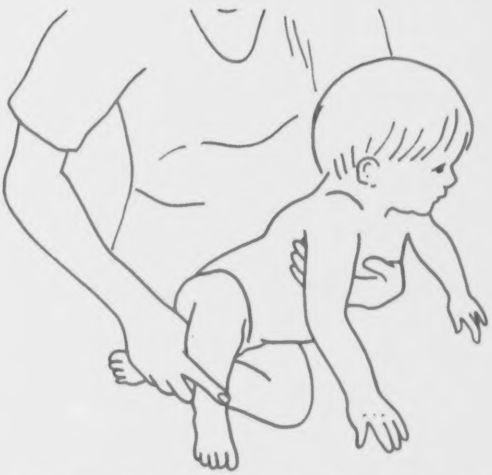
Positioning, Carrying and Playing

So that she can continue to practise sitting when you are not with her, place her in a strong cardboard box with a soft pillow wedged between her and the sides and back of the box and toys in front of her in the box to play with. The box should not be so high that she can't see over the top. Leave her in it, close to where you are working in the kitchen or outside on the grass. It should be sufficiently wide to allow her to tip over to the side and be at approximately a 45° angle when against the edge of the box, or to the same degree backward. If she tips over, the sides give her support and give her a chance to sit back up by herself. You can use a laundry basket or a bassinet in the same way. Remember, her legs must be together.

It is important to mention here that sitting can become a trap for low-toned babies. Parents can



Sitting supported, with ankles crossed, knee to the sky



Putting the baby down into the 'knee to the sky' position

be so excited by the fact that their baby is close to sitting that they spend a lot of time on this skill and neglect the others. This is understandable, but should be avoided, and the baby should still have plenty of opportunities to practise learning to move on the floor.

A new position can now be used for short periods during the day. Again, it is a modified crisscross ankles, knee to the sky. This time, the child is to sit up higher, leaning on a support, for example a small cardboard box or a foam block. She can lean on either a bent or a straight arm, but remember to build in the twist — that is, opposite shoulder and hip facing towards each other.

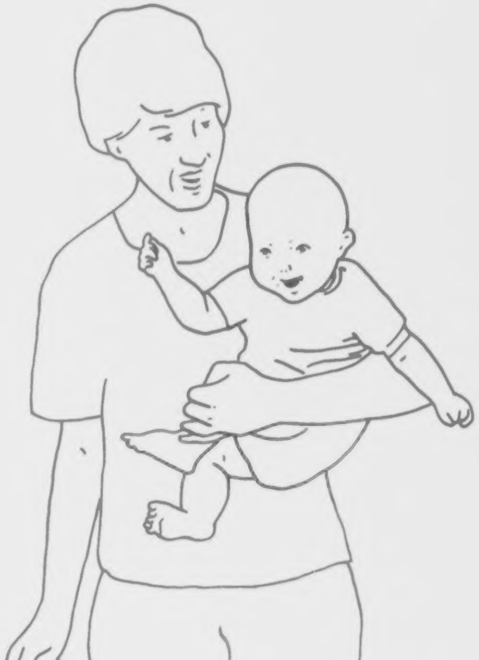
Your child could also now be put down into this position.

It is advisable to keep your baby in her wristbands while she is learning to sit, so she has to use her trunk muscles and does not become dependent on widely spread legs for balance.

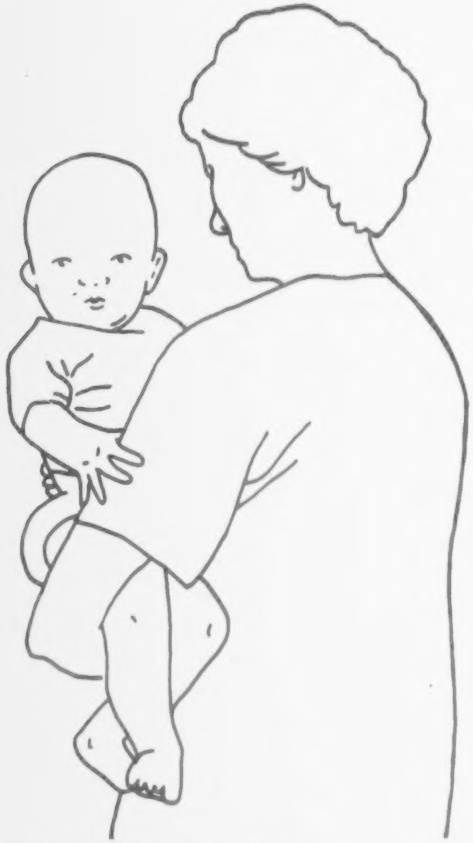
It is preferable to still sit her in the 'ankles crossed' position described in GM.A.12, 20 and 21 when you sit her on your lap.

It is now time to introduce two new carry positions. Hold her as for GM.A.8, but now bend up her outside leg. It is important to separate her two legs now, in preparation for crawling. Remember to build in the twist between her shoulders and hips.

The other position is to have her facing you, both legs tucked under your arm. She 'sits' on your forearm, your other hand supporting her lower back.



A new carry position



Another new carry position

STANDING, FEET FLAT, LEANS ON SUPPORT

GM.A.26

The baby starts by standing on very stiff legs. She puts so much effort into standing that she may stand on her toes.

As she gets this effort under control, she will stand on flat feet. Her legs will be slightly apart and her knees and feet turned out.

She still needs to lean on furniture for support or have someone balancing her and taking some of her weight. She should not need both.

How to Assess

Method: Place your child in standing at a chest-high table or other support. Ensure that her feet are on a flat surface and let her lean forward onto the support.

Score *plus* if your child can maintain the standing position for one minute without sitting down or overbalancing.

How to Teach

Continue to give your child time in standing, as described in GM.A.19. Use bracing techniques if necessary. Gradually reduce your support until your child is leaning on the furniture without your help.

If your child is having difficulty in standing at this stage, it would be a good idea to consult your therapist. She might suggest some stronger splinting material, or be able to provide you with a standing frame, which will support your child firmly and allow her to play in this position.

It is still important that your child stand with her bottom in, that is, with her hips in line with the rest of her body.

Positioning, Carrying and Playing

Encourage your child to stand up against the lounge where you are sitting, to talk to you or to read a book with you. Stand her against the outside of the bath to watch the water filling. Try to make standing an exciting skill she can use to see and do things, which she can't see and do on the floor.

ON TUMMY, FULL BALANCE REACTIONS PRESENT

GM.A.27

At this stage in a baby's development, she has learned to balance lying on her tummy. If she is placed on a movable surface and tipped, she uses her head, trunk and limbs to prevent a fall.

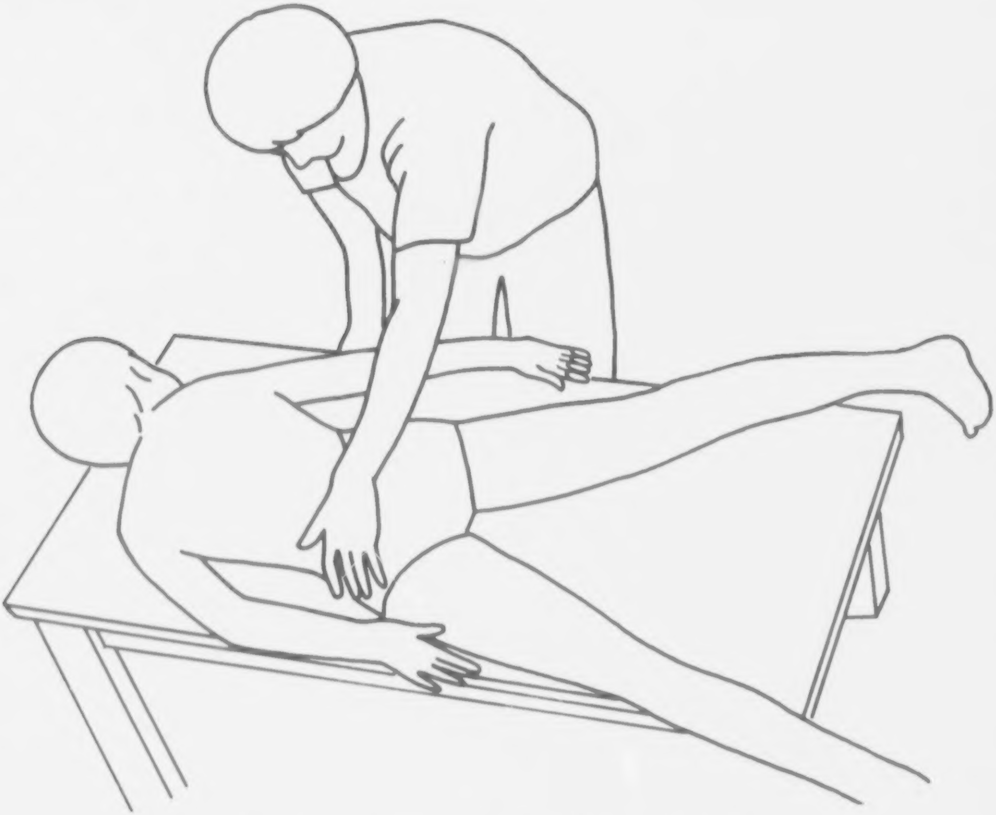
This balance requires that the baby not only elongates her weight-bearing side, but also twists, so that the shoulder on the long side comes towards the hip on the opposite side. Experiment yourself, to feel the movements involved.

How to Assess

Materials: A surface which can be tilted, such as a large ball, a blanket or sheet held taut at each corner, a balance board or a waterbed.

Method: Place the child on her tummy on a surface which can be tilted, and tilt the surface to the side.

Score *plus* if your child prevents herself from falling by 'curving uphill' with the 'uphill' arm and leg coming out to the side for added balance.



Checking balance on tummy with an older child

How to Teach

You have already been preparing your child for this activity by tipping her from side to side while sitting on your lap.

Use a variety of ways to tip your child, so that she does not associate the responses with one situation only. As well as the materials suggested under How to Assess above, you can make use of someone with a broad back — Dad, perhaps, or Grandpa! Have Dad on his hands and knees, and place your child on his back. Dad then gently tilts from one side to the other. Make sure that someone is near by for safety.

Whatever materials you use, always move slowly and wait for your baby to attempt to correct herself by 'curving uphill'.

Positioning, Carrying and Playing

Carry your child as described in GM.A.17, but supporting her down near her hips so that she has to correct her balance when you tilt her. If you encourage her to look around towards you, you are also building in that important component, rotation.

All the above exercises can be made into fun, 'rough and tumble' activities. It is important that your child experiences rough play, so that she learns to handle different movements without fear and is happy to experiment with new movements and positions.

ON TUMMY, PROPS ON EXTENDED ARMS, RAISING TRUNK AND TUMMY

GM.A.28

The baby's increasing control over her shoulder girdle allows her to push up on straight arms with her hands opened out and her arms tucked closer to her body than previously.

Her tummy muscles are now also coming into play in this position. When she pushes up, her back forms a relatively straight line down to her hips. She can now lift her tummy very slightly off the floor.

How to Assess

Method: Place your child on her tummy, with interesting toys in front of her.

Score *plus* if she pushes up on straight arms, raising her chest and tummy off the surface, and taking her weight through open hands.

How to Teach

If your child has difficulty with this position, start by placing her over a wedge and encourage her to push up on her hands. You could also use a rolled towel. You may need to brace her elbows, as discussed in GM.A.20.

If your child's problem is one of sagging tummy muscles, continue doing the pull to sit exercises (GM.A.16, 17) but hold her only by pulling her up diagonally, first leading her with one hand, then the other. This is important because the abdominal muscles consist not only of straight ones, up and down, but also of diagonal ones in each direction. The baby must use these diagonal muscles to balance against gravity.

Positioning, Carrying and Playing

You can help your child to prop on straight arms as she lies across your lap, with her hands on the floor beside you. Remember to ensure that her hands are open.

When she is sitting on your lap, you can help her to lean to the side, propping her weight through a straight arm. Practise to both sides. Remember to use the 'crossed ankles, knee to the sky' position, again expecting her to prop on both arms. This position is also very valuable because it exercises her tummy muscles at the same time (GM.A.17).

'Row, row, row your boat' is a good game for strengthening tummy muscles. Sit your child between your legs on the floor and lean her alternately forward and back as you sing the song. Don't just 'pull her up' to sit, she must assist you by using her tummy muscles to come up.

If this is too extreme, start from the position described in GM.A.4 — coming up from 45°.

ON TUMMY, LIFTS LEGS UP BEHIND, AND CLOSE TOGETHER

GM.A.29

Once the baby's tummy muscles and back muscles are working together, the pelvis is held stable. From this stable base, her hip muscles are able to work to extend or lift back her legs. A stable pelvis also allows the baby to bring her legs together.

How to Assess

Method: Observe your child while she is on her tummy.

Score *plus* if your child is seen to lift both legs up behind her, less than 12 cm apart, and spends time playing in this position.

How to Teach

Note: This skill should *not* be taught to children with cerebral palsy.

You are already working towards this skill when you help her to stand, as this helps strengthen her hip extensor muscles.

Also important to this skill is keeping her legs together as she lies on her tummy and while you carry her. If your baby's legs are not together, refer to the techniques described in GM.A.12.

Hold your baby at arm's length in the air and play 'aeroplanes'. Support her only around the trunk. This position in itself encourages total extension.

Stroking her along her entire spine downward from her head will stimulate her muscles.

If an older child in your household has a 'swivel board' (a small board on castors), try placing your baby on her tummy on this board and guiding it down a gentle slope. This helps lift both the head and legs.

Positioning, Carrying and Playing

The most important principle is to keep your child's legs together whenever she is on the floor and whenever you carry her. Avoid carrying her on your hip and any equipment which holds her legs apart.

ON TUMMY, SEMI-ROLLS TO SIDE TO REACH FOR A TOY

GM.A.30

This skill is a progression from GM.A.27. Now the child has enough control at her shoulder girdle to lean right over on one side without collapsing. She uses her balance skills to prevent herself from rolling onto her back. When she does this, she curves her head and her trunk towards the side to which she is reaching, thus making her weight-bearing side her longer side.

She is now also able to bend her top leg up while she straightens her arms. This is definite progress, needed for crawling and walking.

How to Assess

Method: Place your child on her tummy, with interesting toys just out of her reach.

Score *plus* if she shifts her weight onto one side, curves her trunk towards the side to which she is reaching (away from the weight-bearing side) and obtains the toy. She will bend the top leg as she does this.

How to Teach

If your child is having difficulty with this skill, go back and make sure that she can manage the exercises described in GM.A.20, 21, 25 and 27. It is most important that her balance skills are well developed.

Once she is competent with these earlier skills, try this exercise. You will need a surface that can be tilted, such as a large beach ball or a balance board (a rectangular board on rockers). Place your child on her tummy on the surface, tilt her to the side, wait for her to adjust her posture so that she is well balanced and then offer her a favourite toy.

Positioning, Carrying and Playing

Give her plenty of time to practise her skills on the floor. Put her toys where she must work to get them or she will have no incentive to reach out.

Continue to carry your baby as described in GM.A.25. Continue also to put your baby down as described in GM.A.20. To pick her up, continue as in GM.A.17 — from side lying, assist her into a side sitting position, both her hands on the surface in front of her, then lift.

A new put down position is similar to the one above and will prepare her to get into and out of crawling. Place her down onto her arms and one thigh, but this time the ankles are not crossed, one foot is placed well in front — again knee to the sky. Rotate her back onto her other thigh, but give her minimal help at her hips to get back to sitting.

ON TUMMY, ATTEMPTS TO REACH WHILE ON STRAIGHT ARMS

GM.A.31

Here the child, in her effort to get to her toys, pushes up so far that she pushes herself backwards, or appears to 'swim' with her arms, or just collapses.

If it results in pushing backwards this appears to a parent to be 'all wrong'. 'She's pushing herself backwards!' is the complaint of many a parent who feels she's been doing all the right things! But this is actually the forerunner to creeping forward.

The baby pushes back or 'swims' because she is using her back or extensor muscles so strongly when she pushes up on her arms that she can't manage to take one arm forward. Her efforts cause so much extra extension that she pushes herself back or both arms go up and back and she 'swims'.

This is a milestone in development, rather than a skill to be taught. It will happen in your attempts to teach your child to creep forward. Once you have observed it, avoid putting her on slippery surfaces, so that she doesn't become frustrated in her attempts to reach for a toy.

How to Assess

Method: Observe your child when she is playing on her tummy on a flat, slippery surface with her toys about 30 cm in front of her.

Score *plus* if your child, in an effort to get to the toys, pushes up on her hands to such an extent that she slips backwards or 'swims'.

ON BACK, ROLLS TO TUMMY

GM.A.32

To be able to move independently, your baby needs to be able to roll from her back onto her tummy. It is from her tummy that she will start to creep, crawl and get up into a sitting position. Once she masters this rolling you can feel very encouraged that she is on the way to achieving these further movement skills.

The baby is able to achieve this now because she can control her flexor muscles against gravity, that is, the muscles that bend her forward. She can lift her head up off the surface with her chin tucked in, can reach her arms forward and up, and even now reach up with her feet to play with toys dangling above her. All these movements are used when she rolls.

How to Assess

Method: Observe your child when she is playing on her back, with her toys to the side out of reach.

Score *plus* if your child deliberately rolls to her tummy to reach the toys.

How to Teach

If your child does not start to roll spontaneously, you can help her by using a wedge, about 8 cm thick at its upper edge. You could also use a gently sloping board.

Place your child on her back at the lower edge of the wedge or board. Bend the upper knee up and over the lower straight leg and hold it in this position with one hand while you rattle a toy on the floor, slightly away from the lower shoulder. Use a verbal direction such as 'take it' and wait for her to reach with the upper arm and roll over to grasp the toy. As she starts to succeed with this movement, gradually lessen the help you're giving and allow her to do the movement on her own.

Once she can roll onto her tummy on her own from the wedge, then remove the wedge and start again to help her with the movement by bending one leg up and over the other leg. Gradually lessen the help you give her until she is doing the movement alone. Make sure you practise the roll to both sides.

Another method is to lift the child's head and shoulders and turn them gently to one side. Wait for her arms, trunk and legs to follow. Repeat to the other side. Try this in front of a mirror.

Let your child remove her arm from under herself after she has rolled over. If she finds this difficult, lift her shoulder a fraction and she should then be able to free her arm.

Positioning, Carrying and Playing

Practise this skill at every nappy change. Eventually you will curse this talent as it will be difficult to lay her on her back to change her nappy — she will struggle to roll over onto her tummy and take off!

Play rolling games on the floor, rolling her over and over, perhaps with a peek-a-boo every time you come face to face.

Once she can roll by herself, discourage her from using this as a way to get around. If she starts to do this, look at the creeping and crawling skills in GM.A.37, 39 and 41.

Continue with your pick up (GM.A.17), carry (GM.A.25), put down (GM.A.30), and nursing (GM.A.17, 25).

PULLED TO SIT, INITIATES WITH HEAD, PULLS WITH ARMS

GM.A.33

The baby is now quite expert at pulling to sit. You only need to offer your hands and she will tuck in her chin, lift her head and pull with her arms. At the start of the movement, she will bend her hips and knees, but halfway up she will straighten her legs (keeping her hips bent). Thus she has cleverly prepared herself for sitting.

How to Assess

Method: Place your child on her back, gesture with your hands and ask her to sit up (using a familiar direction).

Score *plus* if your child lifts her head off the surface in anticipation of being pulled up. She must pull with her arms and she should start with bent hips and knees and end in sitting with bent hips, straight knees.

How to Teach

First, check that your child is competent with the earlier 'pull to sit' activities (GM.A.16, 17). Now you can go on to encourage her to initiate the movement.

This skill must be taught on the diagonal. Place the child initially on a slight slope (head up). Do not use a pillow but tilt the whole surface to about a 45° angle. In this position, gesture with your face and hands and tell her that you are going to lift her up. Hold her hands, or support her around the chest, but do not lift her. Wait for several seconds, continuing to give her strong encouragement, until she attempts to lift her head from the surface. If she makes an attempt but doesn't quite succeed, increase the slope to 60° or the angle at which she can succeed. Stay at the successful angle for several days until the movement is well established, then gradually lower the board until she is flat on the floor. Repeat the skill, using the opposite diagonal.

If she makes no attempt to try to lift her head to sit up, then maybe you have chosen an inappropriate time to practise. She may be well fed, or tired, or just not very interested in being picked up. Choose a time when she is anxious to be picked up — such as just after a sleep or before a feed when she is hungry.

Positioning, Carrying and Playing
Always use the diagonal, and pull your child to sit after bath, nappy change and dressing times and whenever she wants to be picked up. Always lower her diagonally into lying by holding only her hands; support her legs up against your chest to steady her.

SITTING, PUTS STRAIGHT ARMS FORWARD TO AVOID A FALL

GM.A.34

It is important that the child learns to use her arms to save herself when her balance is upset in sitting. She learns to do this first to the front.

How to Assess

Method: While your child is sitting unsupported on the floor, tap her gently forward from the back.

Score *plus* if your child places her hands forward on the floor to stop herself from falling.

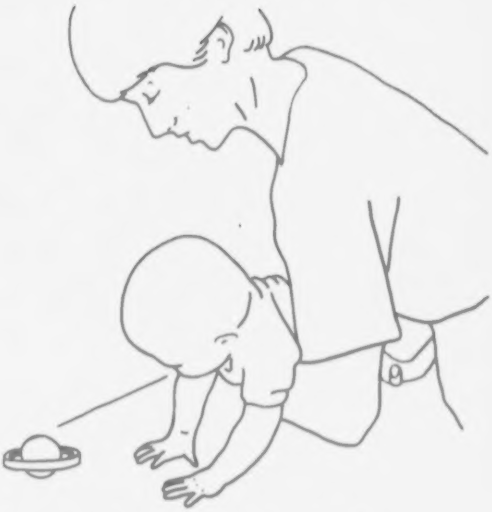
How to Teach

Kneel and sit back on your heels. Place the child downward along your thighs and place her hands on the floor in front of your knees. Holding her at the hips lean her weight down onto her hands, rotating her hips first to one side, then the other. If she buckles at the elbows, wrap cardboard around her arms and bandage it on so that she can experience the feeling of weight through straight arms.

Another way to teach this is to place her on her tummy over a large beach ball with her arms stretched out above her head. Hold her legs and roll the ball forward until her hands reach the floor or a low table, then lean a little more weight onto her arms, waiting to feel her push on her hands. Again, rotate her hips from side to side.

The child must learn to respond very quickly to a loss of balance, or she will have fallen over before she gets her hands out. Once she is able to put her arms out and take weight through them, help her to develop speed by playing games where you tap her gently off balance. Give her lots of practice.

You have already been preparing your baby for this skill, because over the past couple of months you have always been lowering her down onto her extended arms. You could be more specific now and lower her quite quickly onto her hands (wait until they come forward when you approach the surface). You must remember to lower her with the 'twist' in her trunk, so hold her legs across your chest with one hand and support under her chest with the other. If she does not bring her arms forward, encourage them with this hand.



Lowering the baby onto her hands

Once she places her hands down, leave her there for a couple of moments, taking her weight through her arms, then place her onto her side sitting position — GM.A.5, 11 or 30.

SITS FOR 10 MINUTES, ARMS FREE TO REACH AND PLAY

GM.A.35

The baby now sits with her head well up, her chin tucked in and an obvious neck. Her back is straight and she is nearly upright at the hips.

She no longer needs to prop herself up with her arms (except when her balance is threatened). Nor does she have to brace herself by 'W' sitting, as in GM.A.25. Her hands are now free for play.

It is important to remember that children do not sit for any length of time. They use it as a transitory position, along with many others. Your child should be encouraged to do the same. The only reason to encourage your child to sit for this long is because it is important for concentration, and therefore learning, and for certain play skills. Once your child has these attention skills and she is able to move into and out of sitting, you will find she will sit still anyway.

How to Assess

Method: Place your child in a sitting position, with toys to play with.

Score *plus* if your child maintains the sitting position without aid for 10 minutes. She should sit with a straight back, and be almost upright at her hips, and she must be able to use her hands for play.

How to Teach

Refer to GM.A.25 for ways to teach sitting balance.

Sitting should be a mobile and relaxed position, not a rigid one. To encourage this, alter the position of your child's legs while sitting to teach her to balance on different-sized bases. The easiest way to sit is with the legs straight and spread widely. This provides the largest and most stable base. This position is to be discouraged. If you bend one knee — foot placed close to opposite knee and knee falling out — you alter the base and this requires some trunk adjustments to maintain balance.

By slowly moving one or both legs your child learns to balance on a smaller base without relying entirely on her legs for support. So practise first moving one leg while the other is out straight. Here are the steps.

1. Bend the knee and place the foot in and the knee out.
2. Bend the knee and place the foot flat on the floor close to her buttocks.
3. From position 2, roll the knee in and out — each movement being performed slowly to allow her to adjust her trunk to the changing base.
4. Bend both knees to one side to a side sitting position; it is from this position that she will move to a crawl position.

Never just place your child in sitting and leave her there, with toys all around her. She is likely to feel very secure in this position — particularly if her legs are wide apart—and there she will stay. She still needs to spend time in other positions.

Positioning, Carrying and Playing

Because your child is older, and therefore larger, you may be finding it difficult to carry her in the crook of your arm. Start by holding her in an up-and-down position, facing away from you. Now bend up her outside leg and twist her legs around towards you, supporting her in the crook of your arm as low as possible on her trunk.

As we have said above, your child should not be left for long periods in the sitting position. She should also be spending time standing and playing on her tummy and side on the floor. Let her sit on 'difficult' surfaces, such as a waterbed, a trampoline or a thick foam mat; here she will have to work hard to maintain the position. Let her sit on different-textured surfaces, too — rough and smooth, soft and hard, warm and cool — and talk about them. Children often develop a dislike for moving on certain surfaces, such as grass, and this is a good way to desensitise her.

Once your child can move into and out of the sitting position by herself, you will be able to leave her in sitting, knowing that she will soon be on the move to get something out of reach. You won't have to be cautious about placing her in sitting for ever, just until she is truly mobile.

At this stage you can start to use a highchair for feeding and Fine Motor practice, and you could also try her at a small child's chair or better still a small low stool, with a flat (not tilted) seat, and table, as long as her feet are flat and together on a firm surface. Don't prop her up or wedge her in any more than she needs, so that she can use her balance skills in her chair or highchair.

Remember your pick up, carry, put down and nursing positions, all the time thinking — 'off centre', 'twist', 'knee to the sky'.

STANDING, TAKES FULL WEIGHT

GM.A.36

The baby is now able to take full weight on her legs. Her trunk and hip control are so well developed that she can stand when held only by her hands.

How to Assess

Method: Stand your child so that she is holding onto a rail (not leaning on furniture, as in GM.A.26, or holding onto your hands).

Score *plus* if she can maintain this position.

How to Teach

You will already have been practising weight bearing. You can now help her to use the standing position in a practical way — that is, to play!

Find a chair, pouf or some other support which is approximately chest high. Lean her against the support, with her forearms resting on it. Place some toys on the support to encourage her to push up on her arms or to rest on her elbows to play. It is important that she stands with her bottom in. Continue splinting her legs if necessary (GM.A.10).

It is advisable to put your child into small ankle boots as soon as her feet are big enough. There are many attractive styles around. She may not need them for long, but it is wise to have her foot and ankle well aligned and supported at this stage.

If your child still needs to lean forward onto furniture in order to stand, try to increase the amount of times she spends in standing each day. Stand her at your knees while you are sitting, at the coffee table and at the open drawers in the kitchen (propped open for safety). Standing against the outside of the bath to watch the water filling is always a favourite. She will gain this new standing skill with practice.

Once you feel confident about your child's standing, hold her at her hips and gently and slowly rock her just a few degrees to each side. This will help her to learn to bear weight through one leg at a time — important preparation for cruising around furniture and walking.

ON TUMMY, TURNS IN CIRCLES

GM.A.37

To be able to pivot on the tummy to obtain a toy is an important movement skill.

How to Assess

Method: Place your child on her tummy on a slippery surface, with toys at her side out of reach.

Score *plus* if your child pivots on her tummy, pushing with her hands, or hands and feet.

How to Teach

By now your child should be confidently reaching out for toys when she plays on her tummy, resting her weight on one elbow, and should be pushing up on two straight arms to see ahead. This skill is a combination of those two skills.

Straddle her from behind, and when she leans onto one supporting arm, move the free hand out to the side towards the toy. Now lean her onto the reaching arm, so that she can bring the other arm across towards the toy. Continue this rocking movement from one arm to the other until you reach the toy at the side.

Initially, make sure that she requires only about two or three moves of each hand before the toy is reached, so that she sees a reason for the movement. When you feel her assisting you to do the movement, move one hand, lean her weight onto that arm and support the elbow — then wait for her to move on her own.

It is easier for her to pivot if her arms and legs are free of clothes and she has a one-piece suit on her body. The surface you attempt the movement on should be slippery. Without clothes on her hands (arms) and feet (legs) she can get a grip to push and her body will move easily on the slippery surface if she is enclosed in a jumpsuit.

Make sure you practise the movement to each side.

ON TUMMY, ROLLS TO SIDE AND PLAYS, PROPPED ON ONE ELBOW

GM.A.38

In GM.A.24, the child learned to roll to her side from her back, and remain on her side to play. Now she can learn to reach this position from her tummy. She has developed the muscle control in her neck, shoulder girdle, trunk and pelvis to maintain this position easily, and she can free one hand totally for play by propping up on one elbow.

This is an excellent position, as it requires the child to work hard on her shoulder girdle muscles, and she exercises the muscles that both bend her trunk sideways and rotate her trunk, important ingredients for good balance.

How to Assess

Method: Observe your child when she is playing on her tummy with toys close at hand.

Score *plus* if your child rolls into the side lying position, propping on her elbow to play.

How to Teach

This is a difficult skill for a low-toned child, but it is worth persevering with. You may need to prop your child on her side, using a wedge. Keep her top leg bent up, with her foot flat on the floor and her knee pointing to the ceiling. Make sure that her opposite shoulder is rotated towards the knee that is upright.

When she can play happily like this, try removing the wedge and help her to prop up on her elbow. You can also prop her higher and higher, using cushions or a foam block, until she is nearly upright, still with the twist between opposite leg and shoulder, and still with the knee pointing up and foot flat on the floor.

This position does many good things. It puts the pelvis in a good position, it incorporates rotation and it improves balance.

You will probably not need to teach this skill, as you have been preparing your baby for it with all your handling up to now.

ON TUMMY, GETS TO CRAWL POSITION AND ROCKS

GM.A.39

To be able to get to sit from lying, and before she can crawl, the child needs to be able to get into a crawl position from her tummy. This requires good shoulder girdle control, and her back and tummy muscles must be strong enough to lift her tummy off the floor.

How to Assess

Method: Observe your child while she is on her tummy.

Score *plus* if she bends her knees up under her tummy and pushes up on her hands into a crawl position, and maintains this position as she rocks back and forth.

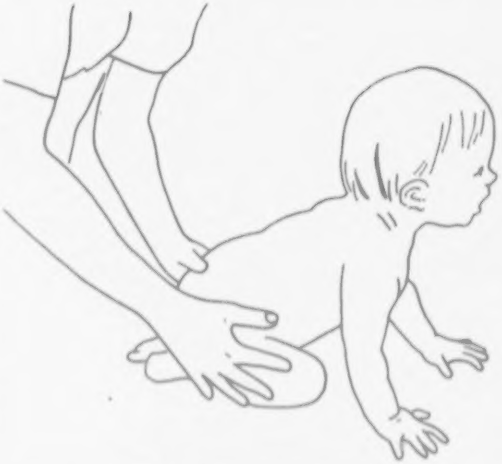
How to Teach

Three main steps are involved in teaching this skill.

1. *Maintaining a crawl position.* Place your baby in the 'side sit, knee in the air' position. From here, support her hips and rotate her around into a crawl position and back again. Once your baby feels confident in this crawl position, leave her there and gently and slowly rock her side to side and diagonally. Resist rocking her forward and backward, as this can become a bad habit.

You will find that when your baby feels confident in the crawl position, she will start to experiment herself with drawing her knees up under her and combining this with pushing up on her arms, if you give her plenty of time to play on the floor.

The child should not have a sagging tummy when she is in the crawl position. If she does, this could be because she has poor tummy muscles or because her legs are far apart. If her tummy muscles are weak, look again at GM.A.28 and 33. If her legs are far apart, use a headband, or two wristbands sewn together, to keep her legs together.



Pivot your baby back into side sitting.

2. *Getting into a crawl position.* This is another method your child might use to get into the crawl position. Place your child on her tummy facing away from you. Kneel down behind her, and pull on her hips, bringing them back towards you. Your child will then straighten her arms and walk them back until she is in the crawl position.

3. *Rocking in a crawl position.* Remember, only assist your child to rock sideways and diagonally; she will learn to rock backward and forward herself.

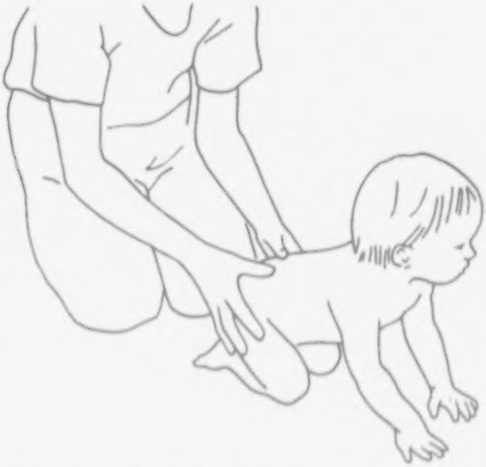
Positioning, Carrying and Playing

Once again, your 'put down' is very good for teaching your baby the crawl position. Every time you place your baby down, put her down as for GM.A.30, and then rotate her over into a crawl. Leave her there for a few seconds at first, but later, leave her for longer. Then if you wish, rotate her back into her side sitting position.

GETS FROM CRAWL POSITION TO SITTING

GM.A.40

Again we see how important it is for the baby to learn to shift her weight onto one side, elongating that side while the other side shortens. Get into a crawl position yourself and feel what happens as you move to sit.



Controlling the baby from the hips

How to Assess

Method: Place your child in the crawl position. Sit to the side and slightly behind her. Call her, perhaps encouraging her with toys. You may also observe this movement during play.

Score *plus* if your child pivots her hips around into a sitting position. She must reach a fully upright sitting position, pushing herself up on her arms until she can lift them from the floor.

How to Teach

You have already started teaching this skill in GM.A.39, with your 'put down'. Continue here by placing her in her 'side sit, knee to the sky' position. Rotate her around into crawl and from here, by controlling her from her hips, back again into the side sitting position. This must be done to both sides, and bring her back into a sit slowly, so she has time to walk her hands back.

It is important to place one leg in front 'knee to the sky' as this is exactly the position all children use to get into and out of crawl.

This must be done to both sides.

You will find that she will learn to pivot quite quickly, but walking her hands back will take longer. Continue to help her at her pelvis, giving downward and backward pressure. She will gradually need less and less assistance.

ON TUMMY, CREEPS FORWARD WITH ARM PULL

GM.A.41

Creeping forward is a preliminary skill to crawling.

Not all children creep before they crawl, but most children who creep *will* crawl, even if only for a short time before they pull themselves up to stand and subsequently walk.

The basic movements used in creeping are the same as those used in crawling. The baby shifts her weight onto one side and the free arm reaches forward. She then shifts her weight onto the opposite side of her lower trunk, so that she can free and bend the opposite leg. She has been learning all these 'pieces' of movement over the past months.

How to Assess

Method: Place your child on her tummy with toys about 60 cm in front of her.

Score *plus* if she pulls forward with one arm and pushes off with the opposite foot, alternating this movement, to reach the toys.

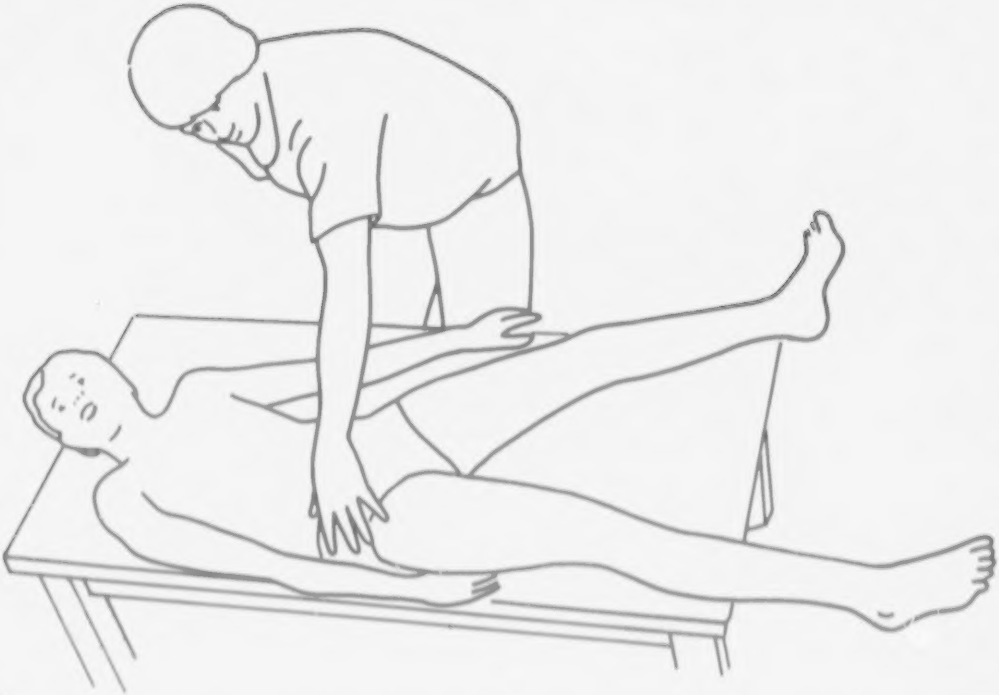
How to Teach

It is important when teaching this skill for your child to be clothed suitably. Have her arms and legs bare — or at least her hands and feet — or she will slip and become very frustrated. However, you want her tummy to slide along the floor during the movement, so keep her trunk completely covered (no bare midriffs) in a jumpsuit. There are several different ways to teach creeping.

You will probably find that if your child has mastered the skills up to this stage, you won't need to teach this action, she will just do it spontaneously! However, it is worth mentioning to keep her toys just out of reach to add some incentive!

You can encourage the push-off with her feet during play sessions by placing her on her tummy so that her feet touch the wall or some furniture. The sensation of pressure on her feet will encourage her to push off and move forward.

Do continue to carry your child as discussed in GM.A.25 and to put her down as in GM.A.39. Pick her up from her side sitting position.



Checking balance on back with an older child — note the uphill curve

ON BACK, FULL BALANCE REACTIONS PRESENT

GM.A.42

Here the baby shows that she is able to use her head, trunk and extremities to prevent a fall, when lying on her back on a movable surface.

How to Assess

Materials: A surface that can be tilted, such as a large beach ball, a balance board, a blanket or sheet held taut at the corners or a waterbed.

Method: Place the child on her back on a surface which can be tilted. Tilt the surface slowly to the side.

Score *plus* if she prevents herself from falling by 'curving uphill', with the uphill arm and leg coming out to the side for added balance. You may also see the downhill shoulder rotate forward at the extreme point of the movement.

How to Teach

Teach as for GM.A.27, but instead of placing the child on her tummy, lay her on her back.

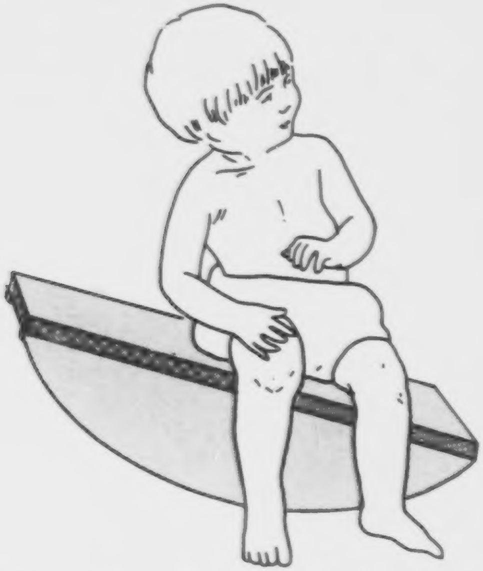
SITTING, ROTATES TRUNK, PLAYS FREELY WITH ARMS

GM.A.43

The child is now very competent in sitting and uses her hands for play rather than support. She should be sitting with a straight back.

She will experiment by herself with different leg positions now, depending less upon her legs for stability. However, the preferred position is still with legs apart and rolled out, and low-toned babies should be helped to avoid this position (see GM.A.12).

The baby now begins to use *rotation* in sitting — a big jump forward. When she rotates, she brings the shoulder on the weight-bearing side towards the unweighted hip, thus twisting her trunk. She will not have this rotation fully under control yet, so that if she transfers her weight too quickly she will still fall unless she props herself quickly with her hand. But she is well on her way towards achieving this full control.



Using a balance board — note that the child is not holding on

How to Assess

Method: Place the child in sitting, with toys placed at her side. You can offer her toys, and talk to her, to encourage her to turn.

Score *plus* if she obtains the toys by rotating, or twisting, her trunk and then sits straight again.

How to Teach

Here are several ways to help your child perfect this skill.

Sit her on a large beach ball. Slowly and gently move the ball to the sides, front and back, and diagonally, waiting for her to correct her balance.

Proceed as above, but hold both her hands and her feet together, so that she can't use her hands or legs to balance herself, but must use her trunk muscles. Make this a game — if she doesn't enjoy it, she won't learn from it.

Sit her on a balance board (a rectangular board with rockers at each end) and slowly rock her to one side then the other, waiting each time for her to right herself. Give her something to hold so that she does not grip the board.

Sit your child in the middle of a seesaw and tip her from side to side. Then place her longways, forward and backward. Again — no holding on!

Sit your child on your bent knees and tip her every which way. She must use her trunk to balance, not her hands.

Sit her on a stool or chair and tip it, waiting for her to right.

Continue carrying, picking up and putting down, and nursing, building in her rotation.

GETS TO SITTING FROM TUMMY

GM.A.44

The sitting position has limited use for a child until she can get into the position by herself. However, she must have the experience of independent sitting, and the broadened horizons that it brings, before she will be motivated to get to sit on her own.

How to Assess

Method: Place the child on her tummy and encourage her to sit up. Or observe her during play.

Score *plus* if she gets from her tummy to sitting without aid.

How to Teach

This skill is a combination of getting into a crawl position (GM.A.39) and getting from a crawl position into a sitting position (GM.A.40). Use the same techniques, running them together into a smooth, continuous movement.

From now on, never put her down in a sitting position. Always put her on her tummy and help her to get into sitting from there.

She will pull her knees under her, and so get into the crawl position, and from there, pivot into sitting.

PULLS TO STAND, STRAIGHTENING BOTH LEGS, PULLS WITH ARMS

GM.A.45

When a child first pulls herself to standing, it is tremendously exciting to anyone who is following her Gross Motor development. The child's world is now expanded enormously to include things off the floor, and it is a sign that she is well on the way towards learning to walk.

The baby's first method of pulling to stand looks very awkward. She stretches up and puts her hands on a convenient piece of furniture. She keeps her hips quite bent to stabilise herself. To get up, she must push down strongly with her arms, while straightening both her knees. Once up, she 'waddles' her legs forward to get them under her. What hard work this progression in the Gross Motor area is!

A note of warning: children with very stiff legs must not be allowed to pull to stand this way, as it will only increase the stiffness. If your child is very stiff, she must get to stand through the half-kneeling position, as in GM.A.57.

How to Assess

Method: Place your child in a crawl or sitting position, in front of the table with a toy on it. Show the child the toy and encourage her to take it.

Score *plus* if child pulls up to stand by pushing down strongly on her arms, at the same time straightening both her legs.

How to Teach

It is not necessary to each this skill. We mention it here because it is a milestone. To teach your child to pull to stand, go on to GM.A.57.

STANDS AT FURNITURE, SUPPORTING WITH ARMS, AND BOUNCES

GM.A.46

The child still relies heavily on her arms for support once she is standing. Her hips are now almost fully under her trunk when she stands. She is not yet able to move her legs sideways, but they are no longer locked at the knees and she can bounce herself by bending and straightening them.

How to Assess

Method: Place your child standing at a rail or low furniture. Use music and demonstration to encourage her to bounce.

Score *plus* if your child bends her knees in a bouncing movement as she stands.

How to Teach

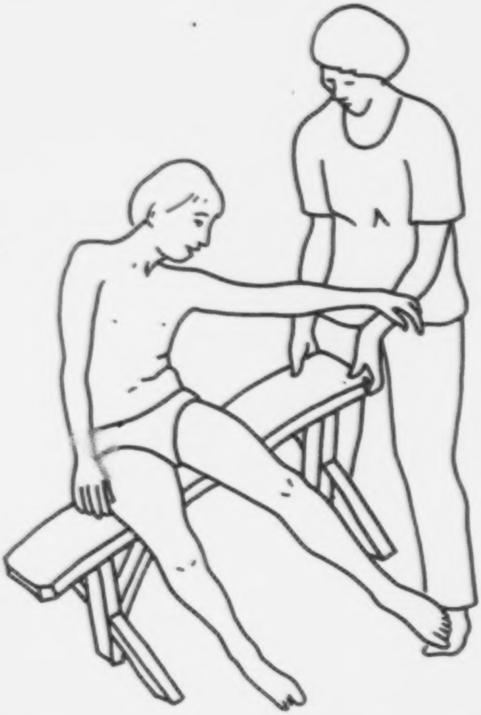
You may find that you do not need to teach this at all. It may start spontaneously because of all the preparatory work you have been doing.

Teach this skill with the help of music.

When she is happy about bending her knees, stand her facing you, holding both her hands and, to music, bounce her arms up and down. Wait for her to bend her knees in time to the music. If you can have the use of a small trampoline with a handrail, it will encourage her to bounce with bent knees. Beware of bouncing on a trampoline with straight knees. Yes, it is possible! — by leaning over onto the handrail and using more arm power than leg power.

A bouncy bed can also be used with you holding her hands. Do not encourage her to jump on a bed unless you feel you can supervise her and prevent falls.

It is fun to practise bouncing with your child standing on your lap and holding your shoulders. This leaves your hands free to control her knees. Stand your child on different surfaces, in bare feet, for short periods so she can experience different textures with her feet.



Testing trunk balance reactions with an older child

SITTING, FULLY DEVELOPED TRUNK BALANCE REACTIONS PRESENT

GM.A.47

GM.A.47, 48 and 49 look at three different aspects of sitting balance. We suggest that you read through all three items together.

If the child's balance is upset in sitting, she is now able to save herself in one of two ways. She can use her arm as a prop to the side and so prevent a sideways fall (see GM.A.49), and she can also use her trunk and extremities to save herself when she is tipped to the side.

This trunk balance is extremely important. We all use our trunks, in the first instance, to save ourselves from falling, and we put our arms out to prop only when trunk balance reactions alone are not enough to save us or if we are taken by surprise.

How to Assess

Materials: A balance board, large beach ball or chair — some surface which can easily be tilted to the side.

Method: Sit your child on the mobile surface, with her legs off the ground. She must not hold on with her hands, so place them on her knees or give her two toys to hold. Be ready to support her if she begins to fall. Tip the surface to the side.

Score *plus* if your child reacts by lengthening the downhill side of her trunk and curving the uphill side, and bringing the downhill shoulder around towards the uphill hip, and taking the arm and leg of the uphill side out to the side.

How to Teach

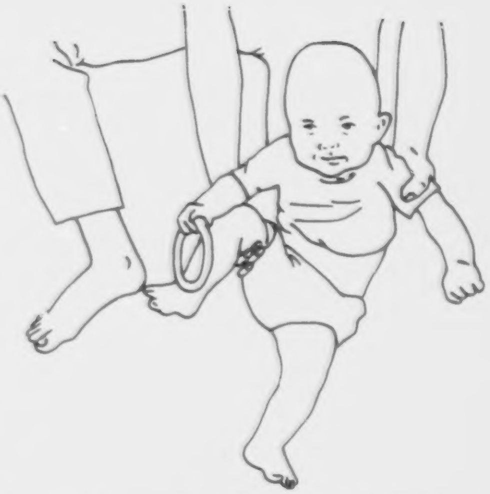
This skill is a combination of all the skills practised in GM.A.27, 34, 35, 38, 40, 42, 43 and 44. If your child is having difficulty with trunk balance, assess her again on all these skills and continue to practise them.

SITS UNSUPPORTED, DOES NOT FALL WHEN REACHING TO THE SIDE

GM.A.48

The child now sits with a beautifully straight back. She has developed such good trunk control that she depends less on her legs to stabilise herself and can sit with them out in front and closer together.

The baby's increased trunk control enables her to freely rotate her body and shift her weight onto one side to obtain a toy without falling. If she were to move too far off centre, she could either regain her balance as described in GM.A.47 or she could use her arm to stop herself falling to the side, as in GM.A.49. These two new skills make sitting the baby's most functional and favoured position.



Encouraging rotation when picking the baby up, or putting her down

In this item we look at the baby's ability to reach to the side when playing, that is, her ability to maintain balance when it is not threatened by external forces.

How to Assess

Method: Sit your child with toys near by and watch her as she plays.

Score *plus* if she maintains the sitting position and can reach to the side without falling.

How to Teach

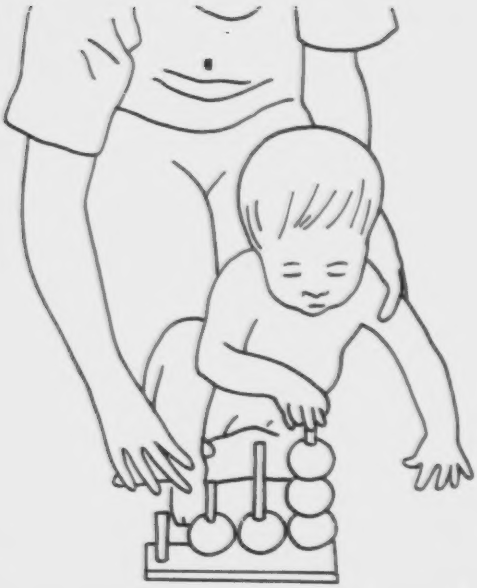
Use the exercises described for earlier sitting skills, especially GM.A.30, 34, 35 and 43. If your child is ready, go on to GM.A.49.

A new put down and pick up position is to hold your child under one arm and around her opposite thigh. Hold her away from your body and then place her down on or pick her up from the floor. This position builds in that all-important rotation and lengthens the weight-bearing side.

SITTING, PROPS ON A STRAIGHT ARM TO THE SIDE TO PREVENT A FALL

GM.A.49

As we have said in the preceeding two items, stable sitting results from a combination of head and trunk balance, and propping.



Propping to the side

Sideways propping is usually preceded by forward propping (GM.A.34) and followed by backward propping (GM.A.61).

How to Assess

Method: Sit your child on a flat surface. From behind, gently tap her to the side from the opposite shoulder.

Score *plus* if she immediately places her hand to the side, with her elbow straight, to prevent a fall.

How to Teach

Your child should by now be able to put weight through her straight arm. It is important in this skill that she should place her hand immediately to the side.

Once again, your put down (GM.A.30, 34) and nursing positions (GM.A.17) have been preparing her for this skill.

For variety, you could sit the child on top of a large beach ball which has been wedged between furniture so that it won't roll. Kneel in front of the ball and hold one of her elbows straight with one hand (or use the arm splints you used in GM.A.34). With the other hand lean her over to the side until her hand is flat on the ball. Hold her in that position, letting her feel her weight through her arm.

Practise propping to both sides and then change to a firm surface. If her arms are too short to reach the floor without tipping her too far to the side, place a small firm pillow at the side for her to prop on.

When you feel that she can hold her weight through a straight elbow, tip her to the side and simply place her arm to effectively prop. Initially, although she can support her weight when her hand is placed, the reaction will not be quick enough to save her from falling.

Another method is to sit the child, then take her two feet and one hand together. Tip her to the free hand side, waiting for her free arm to come out for support. This must be tried to both sides.

GETS FROM SITTING TO CRAWL POSITION

GM.A.50

This is a very complicated skill. The baby needs to be able to control her shoulder girdle, trunk, hips and lower extremities. First she rotates her trunk, so shifting her weight over her bent turned out leg. Next she places her hands on the floor and lifts her pelvis, bottom and unweighted leg. During this manoeuvre her weight-bearing leg is her pivot. She is capable of reversing this movement to return to sitting.

How to Assess

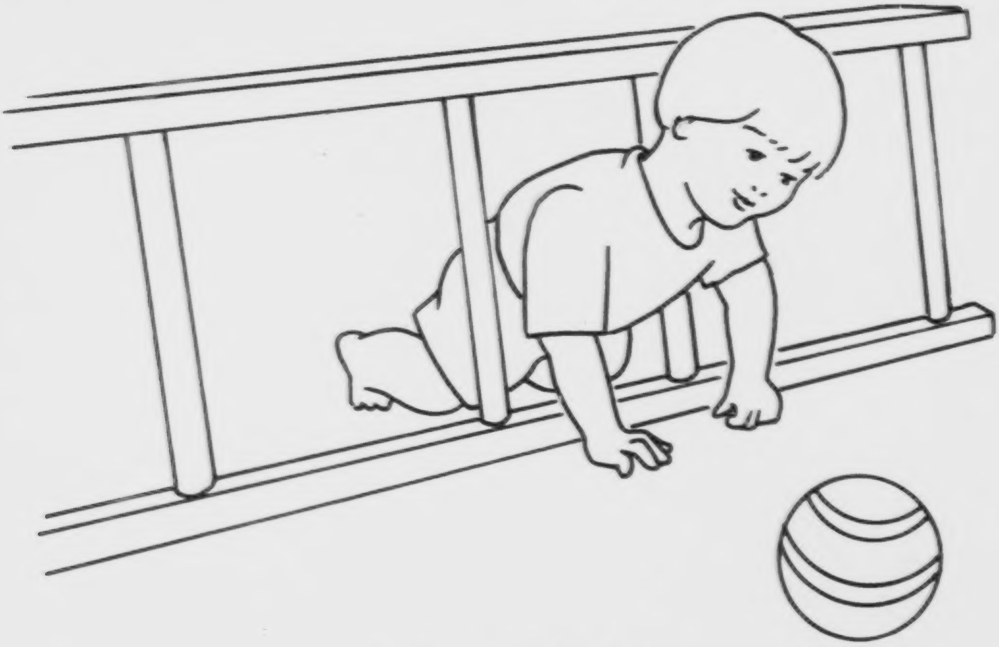
Method: Place your child in sitting, with toys well out of reach.

Score *plus* if she pivots out of the sitting position into a crawl position.

How to Teach

Once again, we take advantage of all the preparation you have been doing (GM.A.39). Go back and practise this skill until she is competent.

Now place her in the side sitting position — both hands on the floor well in front of her, one foot placed on the floor out from her other leg 'knee to the sky'. Pivot her forward onto her hands, stopping before she gets onto both her knees. Make her balance in this position — halfway between side sitting and crawling. This is quite difficult, but is marvellous preparation for her crawling. She is working her diagonal tummy muscles very hard, and these muscles play a very important part in all our balance. She is also working with her pelvis held in the correct position and this will contribute later to a good posture. You try it yourself!



Crawling over and under

Pivot her into the crawl position again, and this time bring her back to side sitting on the other side.

If your child has scored *plus* on GM.A.40, she should be able to complete this movement by herself.

CRAWLS ALONE

GM.A.51

Crawling is extremely important to the child's development.

It requires considerable balance to move in the crawl position and weight bearing on the hands in this position seems to be an important factor in the development of Fine Motor skills. It becomes a much quicker method of locomotion and is a stepping stone in getting the child's world up off the floor.

How to Assess

Method: Place your child on her tummy or in the crawl position with toys 2 metres in front.

Score *plus* if your child crawls for 2 metres.

How to Teach

Remember, the more time you allow her to play on the floor, the more likely she is to experiment with crawling herself.

At this stage your child is happy to rock backward and forward in the crawl position so she is not unfamiliar with transferring her weight from two hands to two feet. She has also been practising transferring her weight from side to side — from one knee to the other and one hand to the other. Place her in a crawl position and kneeling behind her, rock her gently from one knee to the other. As you do this you may find that the non-weight-bearing knee will pull forward — this is the start of crawling.

Next practise transferring weight from one hand to the other. This time kneel in front of her and rock her gently from one hand to the other. Encourage her to reach out and touch or play with a toy in the crawl position. It takes considerable skill to balance on two knees and one hand, so be ready to support her.

For many months now, you have been preparing your child for crawling. If your child has mastered GM.A.40, 41 and 50, she will need only the encouragement of toys on the floor — slightly out of reach. Another wonderful motivation is the family playing crawling games, for example follow the leader.

If she has not mastered these skills, go back and practise until she has.

Postioning, Carrying and Playing

Do continue with all previous pick up, carry, put down and nursing positions.

A new put down position is to hold her under her arm and the opposite thigh, and always place her down on the floor in a crawl position. She can then sit back by herself, play in that position or lie down, but this way she is practising the important movement components many times a day.

You could also start to pick her up from crawling, supporting her only by her opposite arm and thigh.

Try encouraging different surfaces, for example the grass, with your child wearing just a nappy or nothing at all. You may find here that your child will make an extra effort to crawl, in order to avoid the feeling of the grass on her tummy!

Once she is attempting to crawl, you can extend her skills by encouraging her to crawl over and under things. Sit so that she must crawl across your legs to get to you. Accept a good effort to start with and expect her to do just a little bit better each time.

Make obstacle courses out of cushions, an ironing board or length of wood resting against the couch, beanbags, a ladder placed along the ground, a box placed on its side, a chair so you can crawl through its legs, etc. Let your imagination run riot! You can then play games of 'follow the leader'.

When she crawls over things, your child is practising movements that she will use in future skills, such as the half-kneeling required in GM.A.57. If you talk to her about what she is doing, she will also be learning wonderful concepts like 'over' and 'under'.

PULLS TO KNEEL AND MAINTAINS

GM.A.52

Pulling up from the crawl position to kneeling is the halfway step between crawling and standing.

How to Assess

Materials: A low table or rail and toys.

Method: Place your child in a crawl position in front of the table with the toy on the table. Show the child the toy and encourage her to take it.

Score *plus* if your child pulls up from a crawl position to kneeling, holding the table or rail, and maintains the position — buttocks off heels.

How to Teach

It is not necessary to spend a lot of time teaching this skill.

It would be sufficient to place your child's toys up off the floor, on a low coffee table or the couch (with the cushions removed). Make sure she can see them. She can then play in this position.

Leave her toys there, to encourage her to pull up by herself.

STANDING AT FURNITURE, RELIES ON LEGS MORE THAN ARMS

GM.A.53

The child is now able to stand, relying more on her legs than her arms. She may still stand with her legs a little apart, as this makes a wider base of support and so increases her stability.

How to Assess

Materials: Chest-high support or table, toys.

Method: Place your child standing at the table or support, with toys to play with.

Score *plus* if your child can maintain the position, supporting herself with her hands. She no longer leans her chest or arms on the support.

How to Teach

This skill is a progression of the other standing exercises practised up until now. The child needs a lot of standing experience, and as she feels more confident, she will make this progression herself.

You could guide her, by standing her, and holding her only by her hands. Do not yet attempt to walk her forward, as she must learn to cruise sideways before she has the control to walk forward.

To help improve her balance, and to prepare her for cruising sideways, stand her on a breadboard placed across your lap. Hold her hands. If she has the control, very gently, and only a small distance, bend one knee up, the other down, so tipping the breadboard. If she does not have the control, hold her at her hips, and as she improves, at her knees (GM.B).

As she improves with this, remove the breadboard and stand her only on your lap. This is a more mobile surface than the firm board. Again, start by just standing her there, holding her hands. As she gains her confidence, you can again alternately move your legs up and down.

For both these exercises, start by moving her slowly, and only a small way. As she improves, increase both the speed and distance.

As you increase the distance you tip her, you should notice her uphill leg bend. If it does not, hold her hands with one hand and with the other, bend the uphill leg, or let her lean her hands on your shoulders while you assist her knees.

It is important that she stands with her hips in line with her body; her bottom should not stick out the back or to the side.

STANDING AT FURNITURE, TURNS AROUND AND REACHES WITH ONE HAND

GM.A.54

At this stage, the child develops the confidence in standing to let go one hand and reach for a toy.

Because she is anchored firmly on the floor, and is able to support herself with one hand only, she is also able to rotate her trunk around to obtain a toy or look at Mum or Dad.

How to Assess

Method: Stand your child at a chest-high table. Stand to her side and slightly behind her, and offer her a favourite toy.

Score *plus* if your child can release one hand and turn around, attempting to grasp the toy or to 'talk' to you.

How to Teach

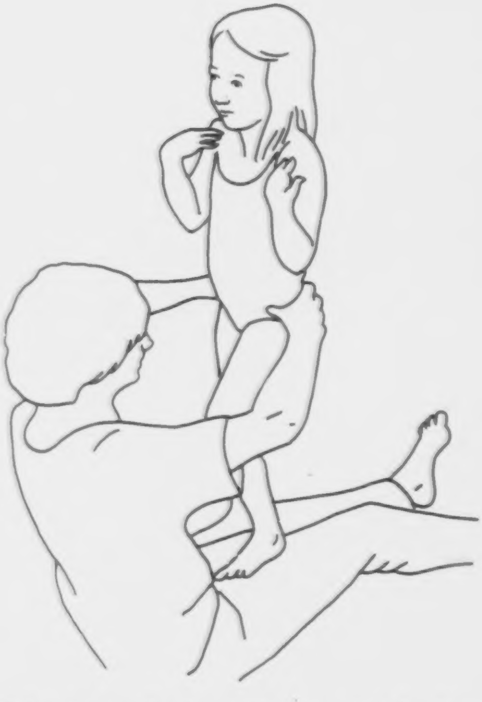
To achieve this skill, the child must be able to maintain balance while transferring weight. In order to do this, her tummy and hip extensor muscles must work together to hold her pelvis in the best position.

Refer to the balance exercises in the introduction to Sequence GM.B. Begun now, these exercises will help avoid the development of problems with posture or balance.

GETS FROM STANDING TO SITTING ON FLOOR BY FALLING

GM.A.55

You may have found your child standing, clinging to the furniture and screaming, because she does not know how to lower herself to the floor. In her first attempts to solve this problem for herself, she just lets go and falls. What she has not yet learned to do is bend her knees in standing to gently lower to the floor. If your child is not attempting to lower herself, you will not want to teach her to fall! Instead, look ahead to the methods described in GM.A.62.



Balancing on the lap, with support at the hips

How to Assess

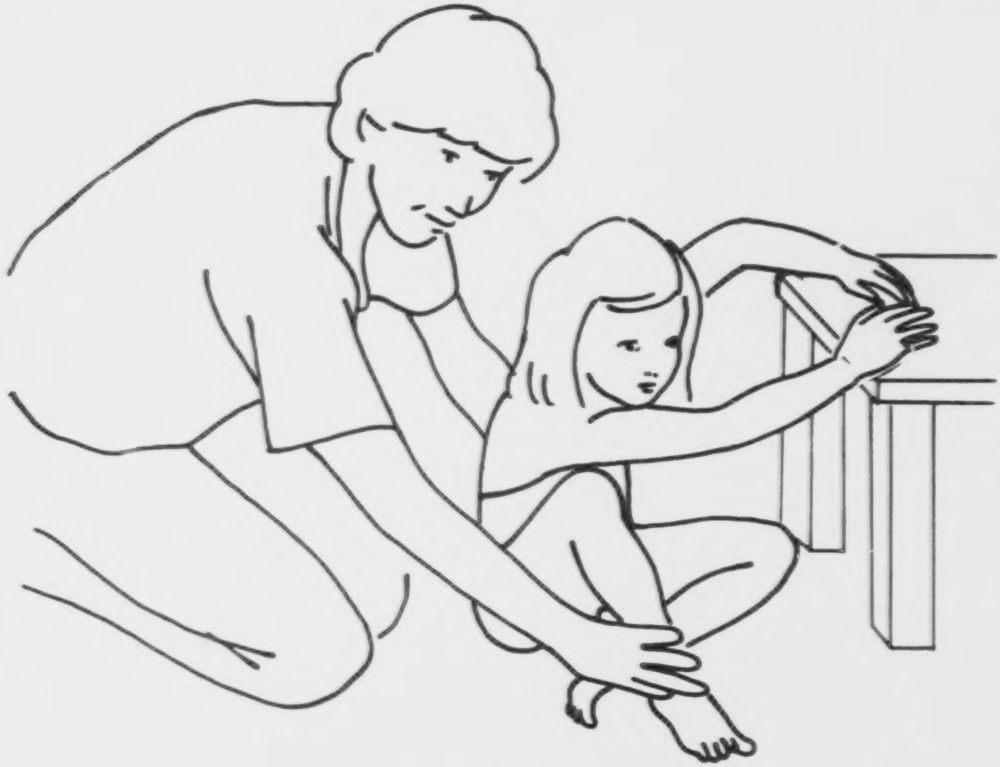
Method: Observe your child while she is standing at a chest-high table.

Score *plus* if she is able to let go of the furniture and fall back to a sitting position.

CRUISES SIDEWAYS AROUND FURNITURE

GM.A.56

The baby's first way of moving on her feet is to cruise sideways around furniture. She faces the furniture, not looking where she is going. She shifts her weight onto one leg and moves the free



Helping the child to pull to stand

leg to the side. Then she moves her weight to that leg and brings her unweighted leg up to it, and so progresses around the table.

How to Assess

Method: Stand your child at a chest-high piece of furniture and place a favourite toy just out of reach.

Score *plus* if your child takes at least four steps to the side.

How to Teach

Here you will be teaching your child to shift her weight to the side. You have already started doing this in GM.A.53. Continue with these exercises.

Stand her with her arms resting on a chest-high support. Place a toy about 1 metre away and draw her attention to it. Kneeling behind her and holding her around her hips, transfer her weight to the opposite leg from the side to which you want her to step. Step the free leg one step to the side, lean her weight onto that leg and step the other leg across to it. Gently place her arms one by one to the side on the table so that she is upright over her legs. Repeat this stepping until you reach the toy. Talk to her while you are doing the movement, so that she knows what you are trying to do.

A fun exercise for your baby is to stand her on a rocker board and gently and slowly tip it side to side. This is more advanced than standing on your lap. You might need help to do this — one person rocking the board and one supporting the child.

Practise the movement at different supports, such as the coffee table, the lounge, the side of the bath.

Encourage sidestepping by placing her at one end of the lounge while you sit at the other end or by standing her at the bed to walk along and 'wake Daddy'.

Many low-toned babies have flat feet and may need boots to give added support to the foot and the ankle. If you are worried about your baby's feet, consult your therapist. It is also a good idea to practise with training pants on, rather than a bulky nappy. If your baby is standing on wide-apart legs, remember the leg bands (GM.A.12).

PULLS TO STAND, RELIES ON ARMS, PASSES THROUGH HALF-KNEELING

GM.A.57

The baby can now pull to stand from kneeling. She still relies on her arms for assistance to pull herself up and she also uses them for balance. However, her legs are becoming more and more active and powerful and they are starting to do some of the work.

Once again, we see how the child's ability to shift weight is needed. In kneeling, she shifts her weight to one side and takes the free leg out from under her, placing her free foot on the ground in front. She then transfers her weight onto this foot and pulls herself to stand. She is not yet very competent at this manoeuvre, as she doesn't have the control to do it well, but it is a good start.

How to Assess

Method: Place the child in a crawl or kneel position near a low table. Make sure she knows there are toys on it. Encourage her to stand.

Score *plus* if your child pulls to stand, passing quickly through the half-kneel position.

How to Teach

Up until now, the child's legs have worked in unison as she pulled herself to stand. Now she must learn to move one leg independently of the other, and this is hard for many children.

Again, we come back to the 'side sitting, criss-cross ankles, knee to the sky' position. Now, instead of the child's hands being on the floor, place a low stool or coffee table next to her. She should rest her arm on this.

Now, holding her ankle and supporting her under her weight-bearing arm, assist her to push up on her arm and foot to stand. You will find that children find it easier to start pulling to stand against low furniture.

Practise using alternate sides to push up on. You will find that she will be happier doing it on one side more than the other. So practise a little more often on the difficult side.

Very often the first place a child will pull to stand spontaneously will be at your knees while you are sitting. If your child tries to do this, help her by placing one knee bent, foot flat on the floor, and holding both hands on your knees. If she needs more help, support her under one armpit but keep her hands on your knees. If you give her your hand to pull on she will feel that she always needs to grip something before she pulls up and that will limit the number of places at which she will attempt to stand.

The side of the bath is a favourite place to practise, with the reward of seeing the water splashing in and bubbling.

If you sit on the floor, she is sure to want to pull to stand, especially if she then receives a big cuddle!

CRUISES AROUND FURNITURE, SEMI-TURNED IN THE DIRECTION OF TRAVEL

GM.A.58

This a direct progression from GM.A.56. Now the baby is able to semi-turn in the direction of travel. This is a more mature walking movement, involving slight rotation of the pelvis and flexion of the leg.

How to Assess

Method: Place your child so that she is standing at a low table. Use toys to encourage her to cruise around the table.

Score *plus* if your child travels around the table, half-turned in the direction of her travel.

How to Teach

Once your child is competently stepping sideways, as in GM.A.56, start taking the toys off the table and holding them just out from the table, so that she must half-turn to see them. With practice, she should soon learn to cruise in this way.

STANDS, ONE HAND HELD

GM.A.59

The baby now has enough control to be able to stand with only one hand held. (Walking with one hand held comes later.)

How to Assess

Method: Place your child in standing, held only by one hand.

Score *plus* if your child can maintain this position.

How to Teach

All the work your baby has been doing up until now is used to enable her to perform this skill. If she is not able to do this, continue practising the earlier standing skills in this sequence.

Your baby must stand with straight hips (bottom in). If she is not able to do this, continue with earlier exercises.

USES A GREAT VARIETY OF SITTING POSITIONS

GM.A.60

Because the baby now has good trunk control in sitting, she is able to use a range of new leg positions, one very functional one being side sitting.

The baby also moves very easily now from a sitting to a crawl position and back again.

If your baby has low muscle tone, remember to avoid letting her sit with her legs wide apart. Use a tennis headband, or something similar, to keep her legs together.

How to Assess

Method: Observe your child while she is sitting on the floor, with toys all around her.

Score *plus* if your child uses a variety of leg positions over a period of time, including the side sitting position, and gets into and out of a crawl position.

How to Teach

The most important factor in sitting balance is good trunk control. Low-toned babies must wear bands to keep their legs together (see GM.A.12). Such babies do not learn the excellent trunk control they need if they can depend on wide legs for balance, and their future movement is affected. If your baby still sits with a wide base, she can wear her tennis headband (or whatever) ALL DAY, as trunk control is learned in all her movements. Help your child to become confident about side sitting by spending time playing with her in this position.

The most important thing is this: Never let your child just sit with her legs wide apart!

Continue to pick up, carry, put down and nurse as already described in GM.A.8, 11, 17, 20, 25, 30, 34, 39, 50 and 51.

SITTING, PROPS WITH STRAIGHT ARMS BACKWARDS TO PREVENT A FALL

GM.A.61

This is the final arm protective skill in sitting. It is the last to develop after forward propping and sideways propping and is needed to prevent those backward falls that inevitably occur when a child is learning to sit.

How to Assess

Method: Place your child in a sitting position. From behind gently tap the child backwards on one shoulder.

Score *plus* if your child places her hand back behind her hip line, to prevent overbalancing.

How to Teach

The best position to teach this skill is as follows. Kneel down on the floor, resting back on your heels. Sit your baby on your lap, facing you. Support her around her trunk so that she feels secure. Now tip her backwards — quite quickly — so that her arm will come out behind her to prevent a fall. You should lean her back on an angle, so that she is again learning diagonal movement, and this will also make it easier for her. Practise to both sides.

GETS FROM STANDING TO FLOOR, USING HAND TO STABILISE ON FURNITURE

GM.A.62

The baby is now able to lower herself to the floor in a controlled manner — no longer having to 'fall' back into sitting. This is because of increased control in the muscles of the legs. She still needs to keep a hand on the furniture to steady herself.

How to Assess

Method: Place the child standing against a chest-high table with some toys on the floor. Encourage the child to lower herself to the floor to obtain the toys.

Score *plus* if the child is able to get to the floor in a controlled way, by bending both legs, passing through a half-kneeling position.

How to Teach

Place the baby in standing against a low table. Place a cushion or a small foam block or yourself behind her. Now encourage her to turn around towards the object or you and help her to lower her free hand onto the object or your lap. She should then let go her top hand and so lower herself to the ground.

If she is unable to bend her 'locked' knees, place your hands around them and gently bend them for her.

Next encourage your child to get right down without something to lean on halfway.

GETS TO STAND THROUGH HALF-KNEELING OR SQUAT POSITIONS, WITH LITTLE ARM SUPPORT

GM.A.63

The baby is now able to get to stand by actively straightening her legs — no longer having to pull herself up with her arms.

As she becomes more competent at this, she goes through a fairly predictable sequence of movements to get to stand:

1. Kneeling.
2. Half-kneeling.
3. As she takes her weight forward onto the front bent leg and starts to stand, she quickly brings the back leg forward and so assumes a squat position.
4. From here she straightens both legs at once.

How to Assess

Method: Place your child in sitting or kneeling near a low table. Show her something interesting that is on the table. Encourage her to stand.

Score *plus* if she rises competently to stand, using a half-kneeling position or a combination of half-kneeling and squatting.

How to Teach

Make sure that your child is competent at the level described in GM.A.57.

Children from this stage on will start to use the squat position not only to pull to stand, but as a play position. They will use it in this way well into the second year, and often beyond.

Help your child to become used to squatting by supporting her in squat as she plays. Support her on top of her knees, keeping her weight well forward. If you have trouble getting her into a squat, face her away from you, lift her up, bend her knees and then lower her to the floor again. Gradually remove your support.

Once she is used to squatting, you can help her to stand without relying on her arms to pull her up. As she squats, put one arm across her knees from behind, and the other forearm across her chest, under her arms. Tip her forward and guide her up into standing. You may need to press on her knees to give her the idea of straightening them. Before long you will be able to remove your help.

WALKS SIDEWAYS ALONG A WALL

GM.A.64

In this skill we are almost at walking! Your child is taking full weight on her feet and is using only the support of a flat hand on an upright surface to balance.

How to Assess

Method: Place your child standing facing a flat wall and direct her to walk, perhaps to see a picture. Repeat to the other side.

Score *plus* if your child can walk sideways using the wall for support for 1.5 metres to both sides.

How to Teach

Find some bright, interesting pictures or a wall frieze and stick them to a flat wall at your child's eye level. Stand your child facing the wall a metre from the picture. Point to the picture and use a direction such as 'Walk to the picture'. Wait to see if she will step alone (she should already be cruising confidently around furniture). If she doesn't, help her to move one foot in the direction of the picture, and wait for her to move the other (see GM.A.56 for transferring weight off the leg before moving it). Keep her hands on the wall and discourage her from twisting around to hold onto you. You may need to place one hand for her, but wait for her to place the other on her own. Neither her hands nor her feet should get too far ahead of the other. If they do, remind her, saying 'Move your hands' or 'Step your feet'. This skill can be fun to do with big sister on the other side of a full-length glass window or door. Your child will enjoy walking along to squash noses against the window with a friend!

Make sure you practise to both sides.

WALKS WITH BOTH HANDS HELD LOW

GM.A.65

The baby looks most amusing when she takes her first steps. She is actually relying totally on both hands of the supporting person, and if one hand is released, she will fall. This is because as yet she is not able to use a properly developed weight shift from one leg to the other. Instead she leans forward and, with the help of the person walking her, she actually takes her legs out to the side, rotating them right out, bending at the hip and only a little at the knee, much as she does in cruising sideways. This is only a temporary measure as the control the baby learns in cruising to the side is incorporated into a more normal stride in walking forward.

How to Assess

Method: Stand behind your child, holding both her hands forward at chest level.

Score *plus* if your child walks forward with hand support for 2 metres. She must take her legs forward, not out to the side.

How to Teach

Start to teach this skill standing behind your child and bending over to hold her hands, at about shoulder level in front of her, with her back to your front (that is, both of you facing the same way.) Let her grip your index finger, thumb one side, fingers on the other, as she does when she is holding a rail while standing. You will need to bend forward quite a way — teach someone else to do it for you if you have a bad back.

Cruising sideways around the furniture is the best preparation for your child's walking skills, so allow her plenty of time to practise. It is advisable that children at this early stage wear ankle boots. This is a worthwhile precaution for children with flat feet and weak ankles.

Give her something to walk to and initially don't attempt more than five or six steps. Keep her weight well forward over her feet, by keeping her hands well forward. Try to avoid her leaning back on your legs at any stage of the movement.

As she performs more of the movement alone, lower her hands to waist level. At this level, she will have to do most of the weight transference on her own.

Always, or when possible, practise this skill without a nappy to allow free movement of her legs. You will find that she will enjoy her walks and you will be able to go for longer distances — from bed to the kitchen, down the hallway, from the car to the house, and eventually you can go for long walks around the house or garden — stopping to play at favourite spots. Talk to her about 'walking' so that she comes to know what the word means.

It is important to realise that low-toned babies may not walk until they are 18 months or older. Do not practise walking forward unless your baby has done a lot of sideways cruising on her own.

CHAPTER 2

GM.B: Balancing, Walking, Running

This large group of skills continues straight on from Sequence GM.A (Prewalking) and takes the child right through to fluent running and precise balancing.

Good balance is important to *all* the Gross Motor sequences within this program. All movements require a shift in weight — just think about what we do when we crawl, get into a sitting position or walk. A child who has learned to walk without first developing good prewalking balance skills is prone to certain problems. She may persist in walking with her legs far apart (for balance), may shuffle her legs forward rather than transferring her weight, and may walk stiffly, like a wind-up doll, because she has not learned to rotate her body. She may also have a 'saggy' posture because her tummy and hip muscles are not holding her pelvis in the correct position, and perhaps her chin juts forward and her shoulders are rounded because she has not learned to control her upper trunk. Some people expect handicapped people, especially those with Down's Syndrome, to walk with such a gait, but it's *not* necessary, and attention to early skills will prevent or minimise problems.

Your child's posture is certainly important, but it is also important that movement should be fun, and if she has good balance, movement *will* be fun. She will confidently join in games with her peers and not be fearful that she might be pushed over. She will enjoy the challenge of playground equipment, rather than avoiding it.

Even if your child is already walking, it is worth checking her balance in the sitting position. First, have someone check *your* balance, by pushing you to the side as you sit on a chair, and observe what happens. The correct response when tipped off-balance is to:

1. Shift your weight to the shorter side.
2. Elongate your weight-bearing side.
3. Make your non-weight-bearing side shorter.
4. Rotate your trunk so that the shoulder on the weight-bearing side rotates forward towards the hip of the unweighted side.

If you could not do these four steps, you would fall and you would fear sideways movement. Now observe how well your child can balance herself in sitting.

If you are in any doubt at all about your child's prewalking balance — her control of her head and trunk, and her ability to transfer weight and rotate her body when sitting and crawling — assess her on Sequence GM.A before proceeding with this sequence.

Let's assume now that your child has scored *plus* on all items in Sequence A and is ready to move on to Sequence B. As we said above, balance remains vital to your child's ability to walk and run fluently and, indeed, to throw a ball, pedal a trike and climb a ladder! So balance is involved in all the skills in this program.

Supplementary Exercises

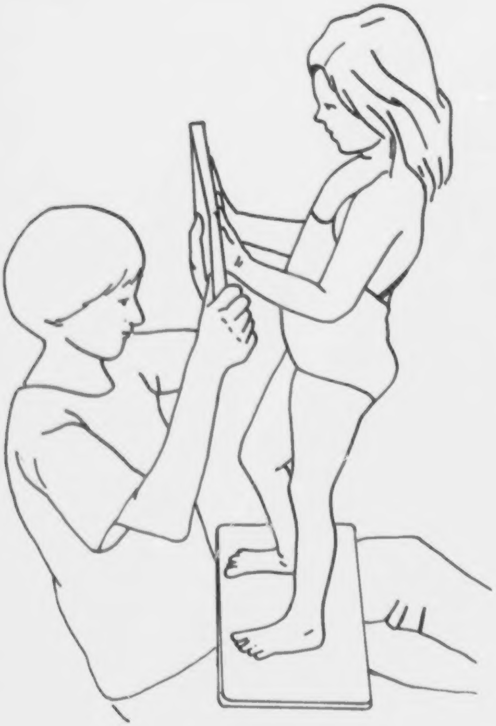
As well as following the sequence, there are many other exercises you can do which will help your child's balance and posture, by making the correct muscles work 'as a team'. We describe a selection of exercises below. These exercises are most beneficial and are recommended for all children.

Breadboard exercises

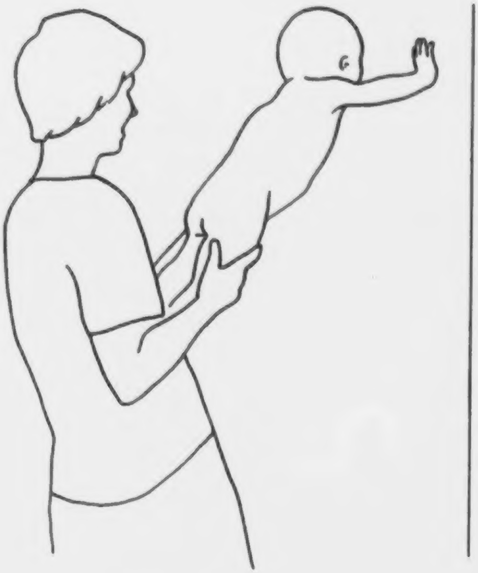
These exercises are to help your child gain control of the muscles of her trunk and around her hips and knees. Stand your child on a breadboard, or something similar, placed on your thighs. Hold a book in your hands and let your child steady herself by placing her hands flat on the book. Now, gently and slowly, straighten and bend your knees. If your child cannot support herself with the book, hold her at hip or knee level as you move the board.

Aim to lessen your support and increase your speed as your child gains control.

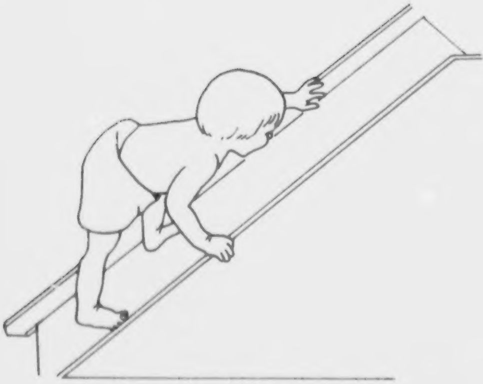
Your child should bend the uphill knee in this exercise. Encourage your child to look behind her, over her uphill side shoulder, as you move the board, so that she rotates her body while balancing.



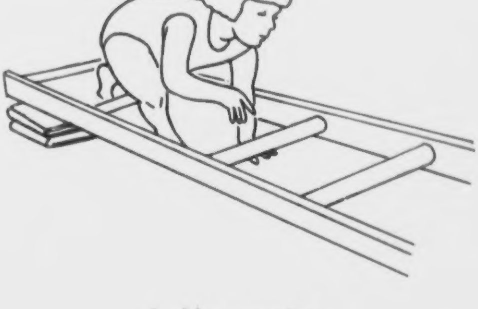
Breadboard exercises



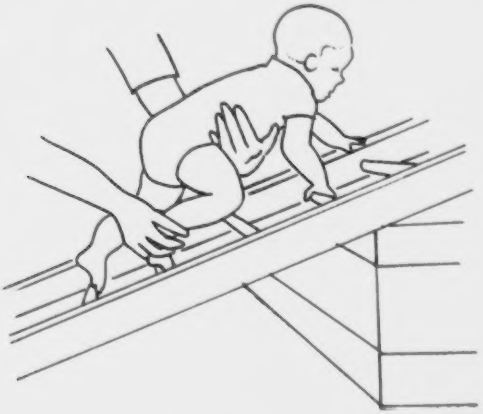
Wall-leaning exercises



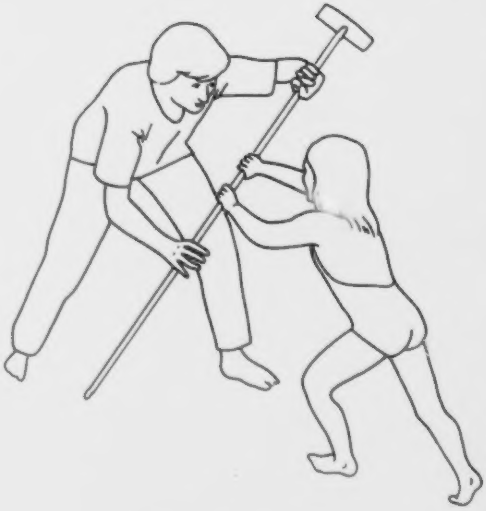
Plank-climbing exercises



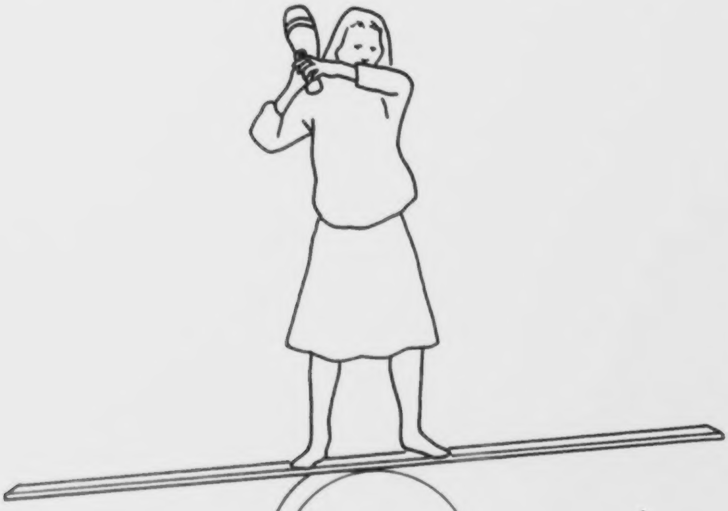
Ladder exercises



Ladder exercises



Dowelling exercises



Seesaw exercises

Wall-leaning exercises

These exercises are to ensure that your child's hip and tummy muscles are working well as a team. This will help her to stand with a good posture.

Ask your child to lean against a wall on outstretched arms. Keep her feet flat on the ground or table-top. Her body should remain straight; her bottom should not stick out. To interest her in this position, try it against a mirror or against a glass door with someone on the other side.

While your child is in this position:

1. Support her at the pelvis, and rock her forward and from side to side.
2. Encourage her to turn around to look at you.
3. Rock her while she is leaning on one hand only and holding a toy in the other hand.
4. Encourage her to stand on one leg, supported only by the opposite hand.
5. Rock her while she is standing on only one leg.

Step-standing exercises

These exercises are to help your child gain control of the muscles around her hips. These muscles help her stand up straight over one leg, and this will enable her to walk well, hop, skip, climb, etc.

Stand your child with one foot on the ground and the other placed up on a small step, wood block or phone book. You could instead sit on the ground, legs out straight. Stand your child between your legs and have her place one foot on your thigh.

Your child will probably find any of these positions difficult at first. If so, give her minimal support at her hips and her bent knee, and encourage her to play 'Simon says' games or sing action songs, so she will be occupied on not clinging to you (arms up, arms out, hands on head and so on).

Once she can maintain this position without help, gently tap her forward, back and to either side — not so as to make her fall over. To make the position even more challenging, slowly move her bent knee around, and she must maintain the position.

Your aim is for your child to stand straight over the leg on the ground. The step is only there to give her balance, and she should not lean forward with her bottom sticking out behind, or lean to the side.

Trampoline exercises

Small trampolines are ideal for exercises as there is a lot of balancing but it is all good fun!

Stand your child on the trampoline and gently tip the mat down to the sides, front and back.

Place a ball on the trampoline and ask her to kick it off. She will probably find that the ball just keeps rolling back to her, which causes much laughter!

If your child can stand securely on the trampoline, throw a ball to her and encourage her to throw it back. She will have to use her feet strongly to balance herself while she does this.

The trampoline must be used carefully, and under supervision, for gentle exercises.

Balance-board exercises

These boards are useful for developing your child's balance reactions. Once your child can happily balance on your lap (on the breadboard), introduce her to a balance board. This is a flat board with gently graded rockers under each end.

Hold the board steady while your child gets on it, and very gently move it from side to side, just a little way at first. Her uphill leg should bend. If she can manage this, move the board further to the side and then rock it more quickly.

Once your child is able to stand confidently on the board, unassisted, try games like throwing and catching a ball, or returning a small ball with a bat, to make it both more challenging and more fun.

This board can be used at all stages of development, from lying, sitting and crawling to standing.

Seesaw exercises

These exercises are good for helping your child gain fine control around her knees, which is very necessary for a well-controlled walk and for confidence in more challenging games.

Let your child stand in the centre of a seesaw, while you hold her hands or hips, and rock the seesaw gently up and down. Eventually she will be able to do this with no help.

Have your child walk up the seesaw from the bottom, taking special care in the middle, then down the other side. Hold her by the hands to start with.

Have her stand astride the centre of the seesaw and try to balance it in the centre. If she can manage this, see if she can catch or bat a ball while there!

Plank-climbing exercises

These exercises are important for exercising the muscles that hold the pelvis in the correct position. This is important for both posture and balance.

It is important when 'bear-walking' that your child should have bent knees. The steeper you make the incline, the harder she will have to work and the more she will bend her legs.

Place a plank (ironing boards have been used!) up against a climbing frame, a low branch of a tree or a couch, and have your child bear-walk up it and then down again. (Bear-walking is walking on hands and feet.) At a later stage of development she can walk up and down, and at an earlier stage crawl up, turn around and slide down on her bottom — this is always great fun!

Ladder exercises
These exercises are a variation on the seesaw and plank-climbing ones above. Place a ladder on the floor and have your child crawl or bear-walk over the rungs. When she is able, she can walk between the rungs or, of course, she can always just climb it!

Dowelling exercises
These exercises again help the cross tummy muscles and the back hip muscles, which help both posture and balance. Hold a piece of dowelling between your hands. Stand in front of your child and ask her to push against the dowelling, as hard as she can. Now move it around — twist it, move it sideways and up and down. Encourage your child to keep pushing against it while keeping her feet still. Her bottom should be in, not poked out too far behind. This can be great fun!

About This Sequence

It is not only specific exercises that will help your child to improve her balance. The way you handle her in everyday situations can also help. When your child gets into awkward positions, don't be tempted to pick her up. Encourage her to find a way out for herself and help her only when really necessary. This may seem a bit hard-hearted but you will be doing your child a great service.

All this talking about balancing — what about walking and running? We have emphasised balance here, because no parent needs to be told that walking is important! It is easy to see walking as an ultimate goal — the be-all and end-all of everything. But the quality of walking is also important. It is important to the child's ability to enjoy life on the move, and it is important, too, to the way the child looks to others and, in time, to her self-image. Good-quality walking depends on the child's ability to balance, to rotate (or twist) her body, to control the muscles of her pelvis, trunk and neck, and to approach new challenges confidently. *When* your child walks will, of course, be important to you, but *how* she walks should be just as important.

There are many skills in this sequence, and your child may not acquire them in exactly the same order as shown here. When you assess your child, don't stop assessing at the very first skill at which she has difficulty. Look further down the list to identify any later skills which she may be able to do, or be ready to learn, now.

Below we list all the skills in this sequence.

12 to 15 months
66. Cruises between furniture, crossing a gap.
67. Walks, pushing a cart.
68. Kneels unaided.
69. Stands alone for 10 seconds.
70. Walks, one hand held.
71. Stands from floor alone.
72. Walks alone, arms held high.

15 to 18 months
75. Walks alone, arms free and relaxed.
76. Pulls a wheeled toy on a string.
77. Stoops to floor and recovers.
78. Stands from a small stool.
79. Runs (hurried walk) with eyes fixed on the ground.

18 months to 2 years
81. Walks, able to turn and stop suddenly.
82. Walks a 30 cm board on the floor, aided.
83. Backs, or slides sideways, into a small chair.

2 to 3 years
87. Carries a large object, 30 cm in diameter.
88. Steps over obstacles while walking.
89. Walks between two parallel lines, 30 cm apart.
90. Walks backwards.
91. Squats to play without losing balance.
92. Stands from a small chair without using hands for support.
93. Pushes and pulls large toys.
94. Runs forward on whole foot, stiffly.
95. Walks four steps with one foot on a balance beam.
96. Stands on tiptoes.
97. Stands on one foot for three seconds.
98. Walks a 20 cm board on the floor, alternating feet, unaided.

3 to 4 years
116. Walks forward, backward, sideways, hauling large toys.
117. Walks on tiptoes for 3 metres.

118. Walks a 10 cm elevated balance beam with some help.
119. Walks a narrow line on the floor unaided.
120. Balances on preferred foot for five seconds.
121. Runs, stops, turns corners, avoids obstacles.
122. Runs on forefoot, weight forward, with alternate arm swing.

CRUISES BETWEEN FURNITURE, CROSSING A GAP

GM.B.66

If your child has completed Sequence GM.A, she is now using her arms only minimally for support, as the control now comes from her hips and legs.

The baby is more daring now and no longer restricts herself to cruising around one piece of furniture. She starts to cross gaps, reaching out for furniture or objects slightly beyond arm's length.

How to Assess

Materials: A chest-high support, such as a chair or coffee table, with another support at an angle one or two steps away. Toys.

Method: Place your child standing against the first support. Put the toys on the other support. Encourage your child to reach to the second support, and when she has hold, to walk her legs to it.

Score *plus* if your child can get herself from one support to the next.

How to Teach

Your child will not need a lot of help to reach this skill if she is ready for it. If she cannot cross the gap readily when helped as described below, continue practising GM.A.65.

To teach this skill, you can help your child to move her hands to the second support and, if necesary, guide her from her hips to move her legs. This help should be phased out as soon as possible.

As your child gets the idea, add more pieces of furniture, in a line or a circle. Add more difficult supports, such as something which presents a vertical surface.

Gradually make the gaps wider and wider, and before you know where you are, she will be walking!

If you child has low muscle tone, use a headband (as described in GM.A) to help her to keep her legs close together. Otherwise she may persist with a widely spread gait. She must learn to use her trunk to help her balance, even if it takes a little longer.

You can teach other walking and standing skills from the 12 to 15 months' level of this sequence at the same time as teaching this skill.

WALKS, PUSHING A CART

GM.B.67

This is another step towards independent walking. The child is still using a support but the support is totally under her control, and if she doesn't use it properly, it will not support her — unlike Mum's hands!

How to Assess

Materials: A solid wooden walking cart — weighted with bricks if necessary — or a solid wooden doll stroller. A flat, low-slip surface.

Method: Stand the child holding the handle of a walking cart and ask her to walk.

Score *plus* if your child can walk forward pushing the cart with sufficient control to stop and balance if it moves too quickly.

How to Teach

If your child has mastered the skills up till now, you should not have to teach this. In this skill your fingers are replaced by the handle of the cart as support. The handle should be just above waist level when arms are held straight and your child is standing upright behind the cart. After mastering GM.A she will be used to you standing behind her when she is walking forward — so now you will need to accustom her to your being at the side and then in front of the cart.

Place her hands gripping the handle of the cart while you kneel at the side of the cart; hold it firmly to prevent it rolling forward. When she is happy standing holding the cart, roll it forward for about 15 cm then stop. It should be sufficiently far forward for her to be slightly uncomfortably off-balance, leaning forward. If she doesn't automatically step forward, first tell her, then if she still doesn't step, use your free hand to bend the knee closest to you and place her foot forward.

When she is happy and confident with you moving the cart from the side, for several steps, move to the front of the cart. Moving backwards, on your knees, slowly pull the cart forward for short distances — wait for her to step both feet up, then move it again. Practise on a fairly non-slip surface such as carpet or grass. She is now ready to attempt to control the cart by herself. Weight it with either telephone books or bricks, and start as before on a non-slip surface. Make sure you are close by to stop it moving forward out of control and frightening her.

She may not know how to push the cart because previously she just held the handle and the cart moved. Say 'Push the cart' before you help her to move it so that she knows that when you push it, it will move. It will take some practice for her to learn how hard to push it, so stay close by until she can control it with confidence.

Master one surface first, before you try a different one, as the different surface will mean she will have to relearn her pushing control. One mother learned that her son could push the cart when she saw him flash past the doorway trying to keep up with the cart! He ended-up in a crumpled heap at the end of the passageway, but he soon learned not to lean too heavily on the handle.

You can make the skill more meaningful by placing shopping in the trolley, or toys, or baby sister (if you're game) to take them for a walk.

Your child is bound to have some falls while learning to push the cart — all children do. Try to be there to prevent her hurting herself, but children learn from falling so try to avoid catching her every time.

When buying a cart, look for a wide-based solid-looking cart with a wide dowel handle. If the handle is too high, your child will be tempted to put her mouth on it and chew it, so have her with you when you buy it to make sure that it is the right height. A 'POD' brand wooden doll stroller is ideal for early walkers.

KNEELS UNAIDED

GM.B.68

The child should by now have good balance reactions in all positions except standing. She also has good trunk control and she can use her trunk and hips together, which enables her to kneel.

How to Assess

Materials: A low support and some toys.

Method: Place your child in sitting on the floor. Present a toy to her, held sufficiently high that she will have to kneel to obtain it. Or place the toy on a low surface, so that she must kneel up to reach it.

Score *plus* if your child can kneel to play with the toy. She may support herself with one hand only on the flat surface or she may lean momentarily against the support with her chest. She should require no help from you to maintain the position.

How to Teach

Place the child's toys on a low support and encourage her to play in this position.

To be competent in this position, she must be able to bend down sideways to retrieve dropped toys from the floor. Help her to do this by supporting her at her hips, gradually reducing your support.

STANDS ALONE FOR 10 SECONDS

GM.B.69

To balance without assistance, on two legs, in standing, is a necessary skill before achieving stable walking. It doesn't always come before independent walking — some children take off before they can stand alone for 10 seconds — but it isn't a stable walk: they have to go from one support to another and if they don't reach a support they fall. So if your child takes off before she can stand, don't overlook practice of this skill—it will be necessary for her to achieve this skill before she can gain proper control of her walking.

At this stage, your child will stand with her arms held in a 'W' at the shoulders for added stability. She also stands with her legs apart for stability.

How to Assess

Method: Stand your child in the middle of the floor. Or lean your child against the wall and then gently pull her forward, away from the wall. Or lean your child forward against the couch and encourage her to stand by herself.

Score *plus* if your child stands unsupported for 10 seconds.

How to Teach

Here are two methods for teaching standing.

Method 1

Kneel behind your child while she is standing. Give her something to hold in her hands and hold her on either side of her hips. While she is standing, gently loosen your grip on her hips until you are just using one finger to support her. Watch her feet: as her balance moves slightly forward, her toes should grip into the floor to push her back to the midline; and if she tilts back slightly her toes should raise up to pull her back straight again. These foot movements are an important part of balancing in standing. She will use her foot muscles more as her standing balance improves.

Method 2
Another way to teach her to stand solo is to stand her facing away from you, against your legs, then gently push her forward (by bending your knees). If you feel she has control of her standing, very gently straighten your legs — leaving her no support. This can be practised a lot, as she will feel secure with you so close by.

You might well find that she spontaneously lets go while she is leaning up against a small table or couch, playing. It's quite amusing to see the expression on the child's face when she realises she is standing independently. It usually gives the child such a shock that she immediately falls over.

If your child is still very wobbly at the hips, give her lots of standing practice, but do not expect her to stand alone just yet. Refer to the breadboard exercises in the introduction to this sequence and use them to improve your child's balance while supporting her from the hips. Also refer to the wall-leaning exercises to help your child gain control of her hip and tummy muscles, which must work together for good hip control.

WALKS, ONE HAND HELD

GM.B.70

Gradually you are lessening your child's support when walking. Walking with one hand held demands a lot of balance, because the support is asymmetrical.

This is an enjoyable activity for parents, because you can walk with her in your normal manner (maybe having to bend over slightly, depending on your relative heights!).

How to Assess

Method: Hold your child by one hand below shoulder level and walk with her.

Score *plus* if your child walks for 2 metres without overbalancing.

How to Teach

Until now, walking forward has been assisted by two hands — either two hands held or two hands gripping the cart handle. To suddenly lose half this support will be a bit frightening initially. You may start by giving your child something to hold in her free hand.

Standing to the side of her, hold one arm — one of your hands on her upper arm and one holding her hand. Your hand closest to her body will be very necessary to help her balance initially. Give a direction such as 'Walk to the table', and only attempt to walk two or three paces at first. You may find that she will swing around to face you and hold onto you, so keep the supporting arm well forward and if she starts to overbalance, stop and wait for her to recover.

It may be easier if you walk her with her free hand close to the wall and encourage her to touch the wall if she needs extra support, rather than swinging around to clutch at you.

Reduce the support you give her by moving your hand further down her arm to her elbow and then to her forearm. As you make each of these changes you may need to take her back against a wall so that her free hand can use the wall for support if necessary.

You will need to alternate the hand you hold and try to slightly change the position of your hands each time, so that she doesn't become dependent on a particular position and strength of support.

Gradually increase the length of your one-handed walks, and go from the table to a chair, chair to the lounge, lounge to the door, etc. Again, practise as often as possible in bare feet, or supportive boots if she goes over at the ankle, and with trainer pants rather than bulky nappies. If your child has low muscle tone and/or walks with her legs far apart, use an elastic headband (as described in GM.A) around her thighs to keep her legs together. Walk on different surfaces (carpet, vinyl, concrete and grass) as all these surfaces require different adjustments of balance.

STANDS FROM FLOOR ALONE

GM.B.71

To be completely independent in walking, it is necessary to be able to stand from the floor without the help of furniture.

How to Assess

Method: Sit your child in the middle of the floor. Offer her a toy so that she must stand up to reach it.

Score *plus* if your child can stand up from sitting, without any help.

How to Teach

There are several steps in learning this skill.

The first is to become comfortable in a squatting position.

Kneel on the floor and squat your child between your knees, facing away from you. Place your hands on her knees and keep your knees close to her hips, so that she doesn't topple over.

Your child's knees and feet should be well apart. Place a book on the floor in front of your child and read it with her. Next, tip her forward onto her hands on the floor in front of her so that she is resting on hands and feet (knees bent). Then come back to a squat. Rock her forward and back onto hands on the floor in front then back onto her heels. Make it a fun activity by singing or talking as you rock her backward and forward.

Then, from the same squatting position with your hands on her knees, lean her weight forward (nose over toes) and ask her to stand. It is important that she doesn't just push her shoulders back into you and stand up leaning back. She must have her weight well forward and you can encourage this by leaning forward over her so that she can't push back against you. If she finds it difficult to stand without pushing back, place one of your forearms under her arms and across her chest, and the other on her knees. Push down on her knees and guide her up with the arm across her chest. Use a rhyme to make this fun: 'Nose over toes and up she goes.'

As you have practised in GM.A.62 and 63 (getting to sit from stand), unlock her knees with your thumbs and assist her to gradually lower back down to a squat. Repeat this many times until she is confident standing up from a squat and returning to it.

The final step is to combine these previously practised skills. From a squat position, tip her weight forward onto her hands, then with her hands still touching the ground bring her weight slightly back onto her feet and ask her to stand up. She will need to keep her hands touching the floor until her legs are almost straight; then assist her to straighten up by gently tapping her back from the shoulders. She may find it easier to twist her trunk slightly so that one hand stays down on the floor as the opposite shoulder pulls back. When she is sufficiently balanced on her feet, she can lift the other hand and pull back from the shoulder. Initially, you will need to help her with one hand on one hip to stop her toppling forward, and the other hand on the opposite shoulder to help her pull back.

WALKS ALONE, ARMS HELD HIGH

GM.B.72

The joy of independent walking needs no explanation. To see their child walk alone is the goal of all parents.

Your child will start walking with her arms held high to reinforce her trunk stability and she will move quickly, because she doesn't yet have the control or the balance to move slowly.

How to Assess

Method: Place your child standing in the middle of the floor or leaning back against a wall or supported by furniture. Encourage her to walk to you.

Score *plus* if your child walks alone for four or five steps.

How to Teach

There is a tremendous gap between the last walking skill (walking, one hand held) and walking alone. It is a huge psychological hurdle and requires a tremendous amount of practice and encouragement. Many children are physically capable of walking but do not have the confidence to take off. The only solution is practice.

Method 1

When your child is walking happily, one hand held, start to hold her behind the wrist so that she is no longer grasping your hand. This is a gradual weaning process from the thought that she must be grasping something before she walks.

As her confidence increases, lessen the strength of your grip and allow her arm to move as she walks rather than holding it rigid for her to use as a support. If she is very reluctant to let go your hand, you can make use of a broom handle or piece of doweling, and when she has mastered this, a piece of hose tubing.

You hold one end of it, she the other, and this way you can wean her off your direct support.

Method 2

Practise walking between two people. Kneel a short distance apart. Stand your child, her back towards you, in front of your knees. Allow her to balance in standing first, then tell her to 'Walk to Daddy'. When she gets to the other person reward her with a big hug, then turn her around to walk back to Mummy! Repeat this over and over again until she knows she is not going to hurt herself and gradually her confidence will increase to take those few steps unaided.

Once your child is confident enough to take one or two steps on her own, the problem then becomes to gain control enough to be able to take eight or ten without toppling forward.

So the emphasis changes from encouraging her to step a few quick steps to being able to step one or two steps, then stop and gain her balance before she steps again. Place her standing in the middle of the floor, ask her to walk and now introduce the word 'slowly'. After two or three steps, touch her gently on her chest and her back simultaneously (only one finger touch is necessary) to stop her walking. Allow her to regain her standing balance, then let her walk two or three more steps. Continue this for eight or ten steps. When she's reached the predetermined goal, reward her with 'Good girl, you walked slowly'. Give her every opportunity to experiment with walking herself. Separate the furniture so that she can walk short distances from one item to another. Place her a few steps from the table or bed and encourage her to walk to it. The more walking she does, the better she will become at it. Estimate the percentage of time that she spends each day on her feet and try to increase it. Try to spend as much time as possible with walking children the same size as your child. Borrow a small walking child for half a day to provide a model for your child.

Again, if your child is walking with legs wide apart, use the headband (as described in GM.A) around her thighs for part of the day, to encourage her to walk with her legs closer together.

WALKS ALONE, ARMS FREE AND RELAXED

GM.B.75

As your child gains control of her walking, her arms will relax from the high position described in GM.B.72.

How to Assess

Method: Observe your child as she walks.

Score *plus* if your child walks with her arms down. She should be able to move her arms freely as she walks.

How to Teach

Your child will gain the necessary control with practice.

Encourage her to walk as often as possible. It is often easier and quicker to carry her, but plan to let her walk to her bath, to dinner, to the car and so on. Give her plenty of opportunities to walk outdoors. The more ground surfaces she experiences, the better. Introduce her to uneven and sloping surfaces (both up and down) and to soft surfaces such as sand. What about walking across your bed? This is lots of fun!

PULLS A WHEELED TOY ON A STRING

GM.B.76

This skill requires either twisting to look behind while walking or backward stepping, both of which require a well-developed sense of balance.

How to Assess

Materials: An attractive and preferably noisy pull-along toy.

Method: Give your child the string of the toy and ask her to pull it along, or demonstrate the action.

Score *plus* if your child pulls the toy for 2 metres either walking forward and pulling the toy behind, or stepping backwards to pull the toy along.

How to Teach

First you'll need to find a toy that is particularly attractive to the child and then to demonstrate how to get it to perform. Remember that your child will only be interested in the sight and the sound of the toy — not in walking twisting backwards, or walking backwards, so you will have to convince her that the best way to get the toy to perform is to walk with it — not to sit down and pull it towards herself. So first hold the string in her hand and walk forward with her pulling the toy. Once it has started to move she will probably stop walking to watch it so direct her to 'Keep walking'. Gradually she will get the idea of taking it for a walk. Perhaps she can take an animal pull-along toy for a walk while you walk the (real) dog.

STOOPS TO FLOOR AND RECOVERS

GM.B.77

Full function in walking is limited until a child can stop walking, bend down and pick up an object from the floor and come up again to standing without assistance. Until your child can do this, if she drops something or sees something of interest on the floor, she will have to sit down to retrieve or explore it.

How to Assess

Materials: An interesting toy.

Method: When your child is standing in the middle of the floor, place the toy on the floor in front of her and ask her to pick it up.

Score *plus* if your child bends or squats to pick up the toy and stands up straight again to examine it.

How to Teach

You can teach this skill using the techniques described in GM.B.71 (stands from floor alone). Now your child will have a weight to lift, so her centre of gravity will need to be even further back over her feet when she attempts to stand up. To help, use two hands on her hips from behind to steady her back on her heels as she stands up. Initially, use a very light toy that she can hold in one hand so that she can use the other hand on the floor to help her back up to standing. It will also need to be small enough for her to be able to grip with the one hand. Use this small, light toy until she can get back up to standing without your assistance. When she has achieved this, use a heavier toy, but one that she can still grip with one hand. Again, let her achieve independence with this toy before you try her with a light toy but one that needs both hands to grasp, such as a balloon.

To stand back up without using either hand she will initially need your help, stabilising her at the hips in a squat position before she stands up. Gradually lessen your support until she no longer needs your help.

STANDS FROM A SMALL STOOL

GM.B.78

This skill requires good trunk and hip control and is a similar movement to that used in GM.B.71 (stands from floor alone).

How to Assess

Materials: A child-size block or stool. The child's feet must be flat on the ground.

Method: Sit your child on the stool and ask her to stand. You can hold your hands out for encouragement, but don't assist. She may push up with her hands on the stool or a table, but should not depend on *you*.

Score *plus* if your child can stand unassisted.

How to Teach

As in GM.B.71 the child must learn to lean forward 'nose over toes'. Initially, let her hold your hands and guide her to stand. Reduce your help as she gets the idea.

A small chair and table are ideal for the child at this stage. The child can push up on the table to help her to stand when she has finished playing. Choose a chair that enables your child to place her feet back, slightly under the chair, as she stands (you will see that you do this yourself, when you stand from a chair). The seat of the chair should be flat, rather than tipped back — a backward slant is not the best position for the child's pelvis.

RUNS (HURRIED WALK) WITH EYES FIXED ON THE GROUND

GM.B.79

The child's first attempt at running is really a hurried walk, one foot being on the ground at all times. You will notice your child uses a lot of effort as she tries to run. She holds her body stiffly upright, in an attempt to steady herself. This skill requires all her concentration — even her eyes are needed. She rivets them on the ground, concentrating intently on where she is going!

How to Assess

Method: Encourage your child to run by having a race or playing chasings or running after a ball.

Score *plus* if your child attempts to run by using a hurried walk. At this stage her eyes are fixed on the ground. If your child runs more freely than this, you can score *plus* for this item and should go on to assess her on later running skills.

How to Teach

This skill will develop as your child's overall competence in movement develops. The best way to encourage her to run is to involve others in running games with your child, and to join in yourself! Look ahead to the techniques described in GM.B.94, as true running can be encouraged very gradually over time.

WALKS, ABLE TO TURN AND STOP SUDDENLY

GM.B.81

Once the child is able to walk about, she needs to be able to control her walking. Her life would be fraught with danger if she was not able to stop when she came upon an obstacle, or turn around a sharp corner. She needs to be in total control of her walking, not just 'chasing her centre of gravity' to remain upright.

How to Assess

Materials: Obstacles, such as pieces of furniture.
Method: Arrange a series of obstacles haphazardly in the room. Call your child towards you from various parts of the room, or play 'follow the leader'.

Score *plus* if your child can negotiate the furniture without bumping into it. Your child must be able to turn and stop suddenly.

How to Teach

This ability comes along with control in walking. If your child is having difficulties, select some balance activities from the introduction to this sequence.

WALKS A 30 CM BOARD ON THE FLOOR, AIDED

GM.B.82

This skill narrows the base used during walking and hence requires a maturation of balance ability.

How to Assess

Materials: A 30 cm wide and 3 metre long board on a flat surface.
Method: Hold the child's hand and walk at the side as she walks on the board.

Score *plus* if your child places her feet on the board as she walks and, without overbalancing, walks the full length of the board.

How to Teach

Start your practice on a board just slightly narrower than the width of her normal gait. Practise in bare feet and hold both hands from in front. Straddle the board, facing her, and walk backwards. It must be sufficiently narrow for her to feel the edge of the board with her feet as she steps and thus to become aware she will fall off if she doesn't watch her step! Some children are not worried by the thought of falling off, as the board is on the floor and there is no distance to fall, and therefore do not attempt to try to stay on the board. If this happens with your child, place a brick under each end of the board to raise it slightly; then she will be more careful about placing her feet. If you have a spare board, adding 4 cm sides to it is often a great success as the children then feel very confident. As she becomes more confident with her feet placement, support her with only one hand. Tell her constantly to 'Step carefully' and alternate the hand that you hold to support her. Keep an eye open for brick fences to walk along — garden edges, painter planks, edges of pools (obviously with all necessary water precautions); each of these will make practice of this skill a lot of fun.

BACKS, OR SLIDES SIDEWAYS, INTO A SMALL CHAIR

GM.B.83

This is a very functional skill necessary for independence at meal-times and for lots of activities at playgroup, preschool and so on.

How to Assess

Materials: A child's chair, without arms.
Method: Stand your child facing the chair or beside the chair. Ask her to sit down.

Score *plus* if your child sits in the chair unassisted, either by backing in or by sliding sideways onto it.

How to Teach

Give your practice more meaning by having a table close to the chair that you wish your child to sit on. By this stage she may be climbing on furniture to sit next to you, and will be used to bending one knee up onto a surface that she wishes to climb on to. If not, encourage this first: while sitting on the lounge, with her standing facing you, help her to bend one knee up onto the lounge and swivel around to sit next to you. This is often the first way a child will climb onto a chair but she will have to be far more accurate on a child-size chair as the sitting surface is much smaller.

Place the chair against a wall when the child is first learning to sit, so it doesn't tip over backward.

If the chair is slightly too large for her, place a small footstool in front of the chair then show her how she can place one foot on this, then push back into the chair. A small table placed at an angle next to the chair will give her some extra support.

Help the child learn to approach from the side of the chair by standing with her back to the side of the chair. She places one hand on the table, one on the seat of the chair. She then sits, and rotates herself to face forward on the chair.

She should be encouraged to seat herself whenever the occasion arises; don't be tempted to lift her into the chair for the sake of saving time.

CARRIES A LARGE OBJECT, 30 CM IN DIAMETER

GM.B.87

This is another balance skill requiring a slightly altered centre of gravity with the child's weight tilted back to counteract the weight of the object held.

How to Assess

Materials: A large ball or box, approximately 30 cm in diameter or in width.
Method: Give the object to your child and ask her to carry it to a person 3 metres away.

Score *plus* if your child carries the object to the other person unaided and without overbalancing.

How to Teach

Start with a balloon or a similar light object which requires the child to use two hands to carry it. Encourage her to bring it to Mummy from a few steps away, at first, increasing to 3 metres away. Don't try to increase the weight of the object until she is happy to walk some distance holding the object with two hands. Using two hands to hold it means that her hands are not free to balance with, so practise on a smooth floor that she can walk on confidently. If she drops the object tell her to 'Pick it up again' and continue walking with it. Use lots of different objects to practise carrying but always give her a reason to do it, such as 'Bring it to Mummy' or 'Give it to Daddy', or 'Put Teddy to bed'.

STEPS OVER OBSTACLES WHILE WALKING

GM.B.88

This skill is most important for functional walking. It would be most inconvenient for the child to have to stop, get down and crawl over every obstacle in her path!

How to Assess

Materials: Obstacles such as blocks, books, beanbags and so on.
Method: Place the obstacles on the ground and encourage your child to step over them to get to you.

Score *plus* if your child can step over the obstacles, while walking, without losing balance.

How to Teach

This is a combination of many skills, including the early Stairs and Climbing skills in Sequence C. If you have not yet started on Sequence C, do so now, as well as giving your child daily opportunities to practise stepping over obstacles. This skill requires great balance, so if your child always puts her hands down on the ground when she comes to an obstacle in her path, go back to the balance items in GM.A, and also make sure she can manage all the balance exercises at the beginning of GM.B.

WALKS BETWEEN TWO PARALLEL LINES, 30 CM APART

GM.B.89

This activity extends GM.B.82, where the child walks along a board with help. It helps the child to gain control in her walking, encourages her to walk with a narrow base (that is, without widely spread legs) and prepares her for the balance-beam activities later in the sequence.

How to Assess

Materials: Chalk, or two ropes, each 3 metres long.
Method: Draw two parallel lines on a paved area outside, each 3 metres long and 30 cm apart. Or make a similar walkway with two lengths of rope.

Ask your child to walk to you, staying between the lines.

Score *plus* if your child walks between the lines for 3 metres.

How to Teach

Most children will acquire this skill if given regular opportunities to practise. You can make the required distances shorter to start with. A walkway like that described above can easily be included in an obstacle course, so that walking between lines can be practised at the same time as stepping over obstacles and stopping and turning.

WALKS BACKWARDS

GM.B.90

To be able to step backwards is an important standing balance reaction. Initially, a child will sit down on her bottom if tipped backwards rather than step back to regain her balance. Until she can step backwards her standing and walking balance will be unreliable. Children also use this skill a lot in play.

How to Assess

Method: Stand your child in the middle of the floor and gently tap her backwards.

Score *plus* if your child steps about three steps backwards or if you have seen this movement in play.

How to Teach

One method is to stand in front of your child and give her many little taps on her chest or shoulders. This will move her centre of gravity back and cause her to step backwards. You stay just in front of her, tapping her to keep her moving back.

Alternatively, stand behind your child, holding her at the shoulders. Lean her back towards you and hold her uncomfortably off-balance until she steps backwards. She will probably try to hold onto your hands on her shoulders and that really doesn't matter as long as she steps backwards. If she doesn't step back it is because you are allowing her to lean against you securely — keep your legs away from her back and just hold her with your hands. You will find that you will be unable to get her to do more than three or four steps backwards, but that is sufficient; stop, allow her to regain her balance and try again a few minutes later. As with most skills, it is better to do a little and often rather than too much at the one time. You may also try using a pull-along toy. Stand the child facing the toy and holding the string; help her to step back as she pulls the toy towards her.

This skill will be used in GM.B.93 (pushes and pulls large toys).

SQUATS TO PLAY WITHOUT LOSING BALANCE

GM.B.91

Squatting is a position in which most children like to play. It is a good position to encourage, because it is wonderful for the balance and encourages good posture at the pelvis.

How to Assess

Method: Help your child into a squat position and encourage her to play in this position.

Score *plus* if your child maintains a squatting position while she plays.

How to Teach

If you have been working through the earlier skills in this sequence, you have already been helping your child to squat — for instance, in GM.B.77 (stoops to floor and recovers) — but she may use it only as a transitory position rather than a position for play.

Start by giving your child some support as she squats and helping her to play in this position for gradually increasing periods.

Kneel and place your child in a squatting position between your knees, facing away from you. Don't try to squash her down from standing. Hold her against you from behind and bend her knees up to her chest *before* you place her down on the floor. Keep your chest firmly against her shoulders to stop her pushing back. If she persists in pushing back, lift her up again, knees still in the squatting position, and lower her once more. Make this a rocking movement, up and down, until she relaxes into the squat position.

Once she can squat with your help for about five minutes (while you read a story, for instance), start to decrease your support until she is squatting on her own.

STANDS FROM A SMALL CHAIR WITHOUT USING HANDS FOR SUPPORT

GM.B.92

This is an extension of GM.B.78 (stands from a small stool). In the earlier skill, it was permissable for the child to use her hands to push up, but now the child needs to stand without using her hands for support.

How to Assess

Materials: A child-size chair.
Method: Seat your child in the chair and ask her to stand.

Score *plus* if your child can stand up from the chair without pushing up with her hands. If she is seated well back on the chair, she may use her hands to help herself wriggle forward, but she should not use her hands to help herself get to standing.

How to Teach

Refer to the notes on GM.B.78.

Your can distract your child from pushing on her hands as she stands by offering her something to hold, either as she stands or before she begins to stand.

PUSHES AND PULLS LARGE TOYS

GM.B.93

This is a play skill in which the child uses her ability to walk backwards and to shift her centre of gravity.

How to Assess

Materials: A large object, such as a box containing a favourite toy.

Method: Set up a course incorporating a straight line or path of about 1.5 metres and a corner.

Ask your child to move the object along the course, demonstrating if necessary and giving a reason such as 'Take Teddy for a ride'.

Score *plus* if your child can push and pull the box along the course.

How to Teach

Once your child can walk backwards (GM.B.90) it is only a matter of finding the right incentives. Try big trucks, big blocks and dolls' prams.

Show her how she can get around corners by changing from pushing to pulling or vice versa.

Look ahead now to GM.B.116, which extends this skill.

RUNS FORWARD ON WHOLE FOOT, STIFFLY

GM.B.94

In GM.B.79, the child may well have thought of herself as running, but she was really walking in a hurry! True running requires a further extension of balance in standing. Initially it will be a stiff, upright run but gradually, as her balance improves, the child will adopt a more relaxed movement with her body leaning slightly forward.

How to Assess

Method: Encourage your child to run by either chasing her or getting her to chase you or a ball or another child.

Score *plus* if your child runs for at least 2 metres; a stiff, upright run on the whole foot, rather than the toes, can be accepted. The child may have difficulty stopping and turning at this stage.

How to Teach

Start by having two people run with your child, each holding a hand.

Run with her, not too fast or you will find that she will only hang from your hands. Run for a few steps and use a verbal direction such as 'run', as you gently pull her forward by the hands, to encourage her to step more quickly. As soon as it looks as though she will trip over, slow down until she catches up with her feet, then increase the speed again. Only go short distances initially and gradually increase the distance until she can 'keep up with her feet' for a distance of 3 or 4 metres.

Next, use only one person on one side to hold one hand and repeat the same practice as you did holding two hands. It will be easier to pull her off-balance holding only one hand, so watch her carefully and slow down rather than have her twist around to grab at you with the free hand. Alternate the hand you hold. As she becomes more confident, hold one hand to start her off, then let her run on her own. Confine your chasing games to a certain area, such as the backyard, as otherwise running away from you may become a problem! Preferably use other children to play chasing with her.

Look ahead to GM.B.121 (runs, stops, turns corners, avoids obstacles). The progression from stiff, upright running to this more mature level of running is very gradual, taking up to a year. Start now to help your child develop her running skills further using the methods described in GM.B.121 and, above all, giving her plenty of practice.

WALKS FOUR STEPS WITH ONE FOOT ON A BALANCE BEAM

GM.B.95

This is great fun — children love to walk along the gutter, with one foot in it, and one foot on the gutter edge.

How to Assess

Materials: A 4 cm wide balance beam, 1 metre long, or the edge of a gutter.

Method: Demonstrate to your child and then ask her to walk from one end of the beam to the other — one foot only on the beam.

Score *plus* if your child can take at least four steps with one foot on the beam and the other on the ground. The upper foot should not be put to the ground during these four steps.

How to Teach

Hold your child's hand at first — she will soon enjoy doing this by herself. Remember to go in both directions.

Practise this skill when going for walks — whenever opportunities arise.

STANDS ON TIPTOES

GM.B.96

The child who can stand on her toes shows that she is developing the control needed for many motor skills, such as running lightly on the ball of her foot or walking with a spring in her step. The child must take her weight well forward onto the front of her foot in order to stand on her toes.

How to Assess

Method: Demonstrate and ask your child to copy. You could include this in a game of 'Simon says'.

Score *plus* if your child can stand on tiptoes for at least eight seconds.

How to Teach

Give your child some support to start with, either by holding her hands or by standing her against a wall or chair with your hands at her hips. Once she knows what is expected of her, gradually reduce your help until she is standing on tiptoes alone. Expect her to stand for very short periods, initially.

Walking up a ladder on the ball of her foot will help her to get the idea of getting her weight forward.

Put music on at home and encourage her to dance to it like a ballet dancer or fairy, or to pretend to play basketball or soccer. Such imaginary play often does the trick where all else fails!

STANDS ON ONE FOOT FOR THREE SECONDS

GM.B.97

Controlled walking requires the ability to balance on one foot for at least three seconds. This skill is also useful for dressing and undressing.

How to Assess

Method: Ask your child to lift one foot and count to three. Repeat for other foot.

Score *plus* if your child balances on each foot for three seconds.

How to Teach

This skill requires very good hip control and very good balance. If your child finds this skill difficult, check her balance skills in the Prewalking Sequence (GM.A), and also ensure that she can manage the exercises at the beginning of this sequence, particularly Step Standing.

Use songs about standing on one leg (you can always make them up).

Practise this skill at dressing time, when it has a very practical application.

WALKS A 20 CM BOARD ON THE FLOOR, ALTERNATING FEET, UNAIDED

GM.B.98

This task narrows the walking base to a more mature width, requiring a more mature level of balance and co-ordination.

How to Assess

Materials: A board, 20 cm wide and 3 metres long.

Method: Place the board on a flat surface. Place your child at one end and stand at the other end, perhaps holding a favourite toy. Encourage your child to walk along the board. If she comes off the board, demonstrate walking the entire length and encourage her to try again.

Score *plus* if your child walks the length of the board. She should place one foot in front of the other (alternating feet) rather than shuffling along.

How to Teach

Initially, your child may need some help to walk the board. Refer to GM.B.82 (walks a 30 cm board on the floor, aided) for ways of helping. Once she can walk the board with one hand held, steady her with a hand at her shoulder, or holding her clothing at the back, so that she grows used to walking the board with her hands free. Gradually reduce your support until your child is walking the board alone.

At the same time as you encourage independence, help your child, if necessary, to alternate her feet. At first she may shuffle along the board, not putting alternate feet in front.

Include a balance board in your obstacle courses and look for suitable playground equipment, park benches and so on while you are out.

WALKS FORWARD, BACKWARD, SIDEWAYS, HAULING LARGE TOYS

GM.B.116

This is an extension of GM.B.93 (pushes and pulls large toys). Now the child moves large objects freely in all directions and can readily remove them from tight corners. She is using her strength and balance to help her solve problems.

How to Assess

Materials: Large cardboard boxes with toys in them.

Method: Set up an obstacle course which has at least two corners and at least one tight space, or tunnel, through which the box must be hauled.

Demonstrate taking a toy for a ride in the box around the course.

Score *plus* if your child can haul the box around the course, getting it around the corners and through the tight spaces without any assistance.

How to Teach

Continuing on from GM.B.93, make your obstacle course more and more challenging. Many children's playgrounds incorporate tunnels made from large pipes. Indoor courses can be made by rearranging the furniture.

WALKS ON TIPTOES FOR 3 METRES

GM.B.117

You may query the value of this skill if you had no plans for a ballet career for your child! However, walking on tiptoes develops strong leg muscles and an advanced degree of balance.

How to Assess

Method: Ask your child to walk on tiptoes, or demonstrate.

Score *plus* if your child can walk on tiptoes without her heels touching the ground for 3 metres.

How to Teach

By now your child should have developed considerable strength in her leg muscles, particularly her calf muscles, from lots of jumping. However, this skill requires a sustained contraction of these muscles for about 10 seconds.

Teach her by holding one hand and walking with her for a few feet, gradually releasing your hands from her grip. Watching ballet classes will inspire your child to practise this skill. There are also songs to encourage tiptoe walking. Associate tiptoe walking with being quiet and creeping up on Daddy!

WALKS A 10 CM ELEVATED BALANCE BEAM WITH SOME HELP

GM.B.118

To pass this skill, your child will need to have a normal gait. No longer will she waddle from side to side on a wide base. The width of her feet apart while walking will be narrower or the same as the width between her shoulders.

How to Assess

Materials: A board 10 cm wide and 3 metres long. Bricks or blocks to elevate the board.

Method: Elevate the board slightly on bricks or blocks, to discourage your child from stepping off.

Place your child at one end of the board and ask her to walk to the other end, or demonstrate.

You may walk behind your child with a hand holding her clothing at her shoulders to steady and reassure her. Do not hold her hands.

Score *plus* if your child walks the length of the board, with no more help than described above. Do not score *plus* if your hand, rather than her balance skills, is keeping your child on the board.

How to Teach

Teach in the same way as GM.B.98 (walks a 20 cm board).

Progress very slowly; it may take time for your child to develop confidence on this narrow board.

Make a game of board walking and practise other balance skills (standing on one leg, walking on tiptoes and so on) at the same time.

WALKS A NARROW LINE UNAIDED

GM.B.119

This skill is quite demanding (try it yourself!) but is fun for the child who is ready for it. It requires a gait of normal width and well-developed head and trunk balance reactions.

How to Assess

Method: With chalk, draw a line on the ground about 5 cm wide and 3 metres long.

Demonstrate walking along the line, bringing each foot in front of the other to touch the line. Ask your child to have a go.

Score *plus* if your child can walk with alternating feet on the line without overbalancing and without help.

How to Teach

Always attempt these difficult balance skills in bare feet to make the most of the balance reactions in the feet.

Demonstrate to your child the action you want her to use and emphasise the heel to toe step to help her to achieve the line walking.

In the early stages you will need to hold one hand and walk along with her. Start 1 metre from the end of the line so that she only needs to do three or four steps. Gradually start further and further back on the line, still holding her hand. Don't try to increase the distance until she is consistently heel–toe walking the shorter distance. Practice requires a lot of concentration so make your practice sessions short.

Only when she can walk the 3 metres without straying from the line, should you start to reduce your hand support. Go back then to the shorter distance and don't increase until she is confident over the shorter distance. Make sure she has room on either side of her to use her hands for balance.

Walks to the shops will now take twice as long, as she walks on every join and crack in the footpath. Joins in the lino and the carpet are also good practice places. You may like to draw footprints on the concrete for her to follow.

BALANCES ON PREFERRED FOOT FOR FIVE SECONDS

GM.B.120

This is an extension of GM.B.97 (stands on one foot for three seconds). At the earlier level, the child was required to stand on each foot for three seconds. For this harder skill, she needs to demonstrate her ability on her preferred foot only.

How to Assess

Method: Ask your child to stand on one foot and count to five.

Score *plus* if your child can stand on her preferred foot for five seconds.

How to Teach

Continue on from GM.B.97 until your child can stand on at least one of her feet for five seconds.

Most children have a preferred side, where they find balancing easier, but do not neglect the other side!

RUNS, STOPS, TURNS CORNERS, AVOIDS OBSTACLES

GM.B.121

Once your child is running, she has to be able to control the run — to turn corners, avoid obstacles and, above all, to stop.

As we said in GM.B.94 (runs forward on whole foot, stiffly), these skills are learned gradually, over time, and with plenty of practice.

How to Assess

Materials: Obstacles such as chairs, boxes, pegs in the ground.

Method: Set up an obstacle course that requires your child to turn corners and avoid obstacles.

If possible, involve another child in the activity. Present it as a game, in which the children must run around the course, and stop when you call 'STOP'.

Score *plus* if your child can run around the course, turning corners without breaking her stride, avoiding obstacles and stopping within a few paces at your direction.

How to Teach

Once your child is running, practice will see her become more adventurous. You are sure to see her take some tumbles as she runs with the bigger children, but this is all part of learning and she should not be discouraged from trying.

Start to teach direction change in running by holding her hand, running to one end of the garden, turning around at almost the same speed and then running back again. Initially your turn will be a wide circle, but gradually make it sharper. Use a chair or a stick to mark the turning point. Then start to put some obstacles down the middle of the run and, still holding her hand, run in and out of them with her. When you feel she no longer needs to hold your hand, chase her or let her chase you.

Help her to control her stopping by having someone call out 'STOP' while you are still running with her, and then, when she is running alone, playing 'stop and go' games. She will enjoy this more if she is given turns at shouting the directions!

RUNS ON FOREFOOT, WEIGHT FORWARD, WITH ALTERNATE ARM SWING

GM.B.122

If you watch a slow-motion film of someone running, you will see that there is a phase of the movement in which neither foot touches the ground. To run in a mature and fluent way, the child needs to be very well balanced, with her weight slightly forward and her arms swinging alternately.

Your child may achieve this skill at much the same time as the previous skill in this sequence, or it may take her longer to develop a mature, arm-swinging run.

How to Assess

Method: Set up a game in which your child is required to run fast. You will need to watch her carefully, so it will be best if someone else is running with her.

Score *plus* if your child runs with a slight tilt forward, on her forefeet (heels off the ground) for at least 3.5 metres. She must swing her arms alternately as she runs.

How to Teach

Your child should by now be walking on her toes (see GM.B.117); now encourage her to run on her toes as well.

If she does not yet swing her arms, show her how to do this, and tell her that it helps her to run fast. Give her opportunities to watch older children running and, if possible, to run with them.

REMEMBERING AND EXTENDING THIS SEQUENCE

Here are some activities you could go on to next:

- Turning somersaults. Be careful of this activity with children with Down's Syndrome, as a percentage of these children do have unstable cervical vertebrae.
- Walking on heels. This skill is necessary before the child can develop a mature heel – toe gait, rather than a gait where the whole foot is placed down on the ground when taking a step forward.
- Heel – toe walking.
- Walking on heels.
- Walking a 10 cm balance beam without any help.
- Chin-ups.
- Wheelbarrows, held at knees — a wonderful activity for developing control at the shoulders, and extension generally.
- Running on toes, turning sharp corners and running along a zigzag line.
- Galloping.

CHAPTER 3

GM.C: Stairs and Climbing

Climbing (both stairs and ladders) is a functional skill which both uses and extends the child's strength and balance. Climbing is important to both independent mobility and play. The ability to cope with stairs and ladders is also important to the child's safety as she grows older and more independent.

If you live in a house or flat with no stairs at all, you will need to make a special effort to teach these skills. They *are* important, for the reasons given above, even though you child may not seem to need them now. If you know someone who is handy with tools and wood, and you have enough space, consider installing a set of play steps in the garden. This should have four or five rises of normal height and depth, a platform at the top, and perhaps a slippery slide down the other side. Perhaps it could have a little cubby house under the top platform. The steps should have a rail at each side, at a suitable height for your child. This is a tall order, of course, and visits to a friend's house, well endowed with steps, or a toy library can do just as well!

Below we list all the skills in this sequence.

12 to 15 months
73. Climbs stairs on hands and knees.

15 to 18 months
80. Crawls backwards down stairs.

18 months to 2 years
84. Walks up stairs, holding the rail *and* hand held, two feet to a step.

2 to 3 years
99. Walks up stairs, holding the rail, two feet to a step.
100. Walks down stairs, holding rail *and* hand held, two feet to a step.
101. Steps up on a block unaided.
102. Steps down from a block unaided.
103. Walks up stairs, holding the rail, alternating feet.
104. Climbs up and down a 1 metre ladder or frame.
105. Goes up and down a slide independently.

3 to 4 years
123. Walks up stairs, not holding the rail, alternating feet.
124. Walks down stairs, holding the rail, alternating feet.
125. Carries objects up and down stairs.
126. Climbs up and down a 3 metre ladder or frame.

CLIMBS STAIRS ON HANDS AND KNEES

GM.C.73

This is a skill that many parents discourage by placing fences at the tops and bottoms of stairs. However, it is the first of the climbing skills and as such is a necessary prerequisite to climbing stairs on two feet. It is worth spending the time to teach your child this skill, though of course you will leave the fences up when you can't be near by.

How to Assess

Materials: A flight of four to six stairs and some toys.

Method: Put the toys at the top of the stairs and encourage your child to climb to them.

Score *plus* if your child crawls up the stairs on her hands and knees.

How to Teach

Start with just one step. If your child is crawling as a means of quick locomotion, she will probably not hesitate at one step, but lift one knee up onto the step and carry on crawling.

If not, put her toys up on the step and help her to bend one knee up, hold this knee and wait for her to lift the other up.

Next, try two steps — at the front or back door or construct two steps with large books or boxes. More than one step will require her to balance on the width of the step. If she goes to sit back on one hip, she will fall off and it is safer for her to learn this fact on two steps rather than six — not so far to fall!

Gradually increase the number of stairs to crawl up but always be close by if there is any danger of her hurting herself if she falls. A crawling child is always likely to forget and twist around to sit and miss the step.

CRAWLS BACKWARDS DOWN STAIRS

GM.C.80

This may seem a strange task to have to teach your child, but it is really a self-preservation skill and until she learns it, she will have many head-first falls off beds, furniture, stairs, etc.

How to Assess

Materials: A flight of two or three steps.
Method: Place the child sitting at the top of a flight of stairs and encourage her to crawl down.

Score *plus* if your child crawls down, rotating from sitting to her tummy and lowering legs down first.

How to Teach

Teaching this skill is just a matter of guiding her to come down backwards each time she tries to get off the bed or lounge or to crawl down stairs. Unfortunately, you're not going to be there every time this happens so a few short practice repetitions will help to reinforce the skill.

Sit her on the lounge and ask her to get down to the floor. From the sitting position, place both her hands on the seat away from you and lean her forward onto her hands, twisting her trunk. As you do this, her legs will slip out from under her and drop down against the lounge to the floor. Initially the whole movement will happen so quickly that she will get a surprise when her feet touch the ground; reassure her by saying 'Good girl, you're standing up'.

As you are doing the movement you may find it helpful to say 'legs down' or 'legs first', after you have told her to 'Get down'.

Practise initially on high surfaces like the bed or lounge because with smaller heights she will be tempted to go headfirst. If you continually say 'legs first' then this will in time be all you need to say when you see her at the edge of the bed or chair or at the top of the stairs.

When she is to go backwards down stairs, again, sit her on the top stair and help her rotate around onto her knees. You guide her legs as necessary, but she should be able to bring her hands down herself. It is usually sufficient to guide one leg down for her and wait for her to bring the other leg and hand.

At the same time as you are teaching this skill, encourage your child to use her crawling skills in new ways. Set up an obstacle course, so that she can crawl over, under and through a variety of barriers. Let her crawl up and down slopes and in the sand. Crawling is now easy, fun and a wonderful way to explore the world.

WALKS UP STAIRS, HOLDING THE RAIL *AND* HAND HELD, TWO FEET TO A STEP

GM.C.84

Once the child is walking, she can learn to climb stairs on her feet. The one-legged balance required for this skill is important for stable walking.

How to Assess

Materials: A flight of six steps with a handrail; the steps should not be higher than the height of the child's knees — preferably lower. The handrail should be approximately the height of the child's shoulder.
Method: Hold your child's hand and place her other hand on the rail. Ask her to step up the stairs.

Score *plus* if your child can walk up six stairs, one hand held, one hand on the rail. The child at this stage will be putting both feet on the one step.

How to Teach

Stand the child at the bottom of the stairs and from behind place one hand on the rail (at the side, ahead of her feet); hold your hand over it. Allow her to grasp your other hand. With your third hand (or remove your support from the hand on the rail!) bend the leg on the side away from the rail and place the foot on the step. Place that hand back over her hand on the rail and gently pull her weight forward over the bent leg with the hand you are grasping. Reward her attempt with 'Good girl, you stepped up', and then repeat the movement.

When she starts to co-operate with the movement, lean her weight forward and wait for her to bend her leg up to place first one foot on the step and then the other. Slide her hand further up the rail and lean her forward again with the grasped hand.

The next step is to allow her to move her own hand on the rail. This hand needs to be kept in front of her feet. Initially she will forget her hand and step ahead of it. Remind her by tapping her hand and telling her to 'Move your hand'. Practise alternating the hand holding onto the rail.

Always keep her weight well forward over her feet and remember to keep the hand on the rail in front of her feet at all times.

WALKS UPSTAIRS, HOLDING THE RAIL, TWO FEET TO A STEP

GM.C.99

This skill is an extension of GM.C.84, requiring an increase in confidence and leg strength.

How to Assess

Materials: A flight of stairs, as described in GM.C.84.
Method: Ask your child to walk up the stairs.

Score *plus* if your child steps up one step at a time, holding the rail with one hand and with the other hand free. She may go up two feet to a step.

How to Teach

Your child should be happily stepping upstairs with you holding one hand, and moving her own hand on the rail. So now you can start to wean her off the support you are giving to her free hand. Use all the tricks that you have previously used to reduce your hand support for other skills; by now you must know the lot! First move your support to the wrist rather than allowing her to grip your hand and practise lots of steps until she is used to that amount of support. Gradually slacken off the support so that she is not leaning on you or pulling on you. When you feel that she is no longer dependent on the support of your hand, lessen your grip and just hold the top of the sleeve of her jumper, close to her hand. This won't provide any support but will give her the confidence of knowing that you are there if needed. Finally, just step up with her but don't touch her. Once she has done this a few times, she won't bother waiting for you to step up with her.

WALKS DOWN STAIRS, HOLDING THE RAIL *AND* HAND HELD, TWO FEET TO A STEP

GM.C.100

For a long time after your child happily walks up stairs she will still continue to get down on her hands and knees and crawl backwards down the stairs. Often this is not from a lack of ability but from habit and lack of confidence. Practice of this skill is aimed to give her this confidence.

How to Assess

Materials: A set of steps, as in GM.C.84.
Method: Hold your child's hand, place the other hand on the rail and ask her to step down.

Score *plus* if your child steps down the stairs, moving her own hand on the rail.

How to Teach

It is important initially for you to stand in front and facing your child as she steps down, as she will possibly be quite fearful of falling. So, standing below her, hold the free hand and place your hand over her other hand on the rail. Lean her forward and tell her to 'Step down'. You may need to lean her forward by gently pulling on the hand you are holding.

When she steps down tell her to move her hand forward on the rail and help her if necessary. Continue down four to six steps and give her a big hug when she reaches the bottom. Gradually release your support of the hand on the rail. When she is happy stepping down and moving her hand on her own, stand to the side of her and hold her hand as you both step down together.

While your child may have one hand on the rail and the other hand held to score *plus* on this item, start to reduce your support to the side away from the rail as soon as possible. Use the approach described in GM.C.99.

STEPS UP ON A BLOCK UNAIDED

GM.C.101

This skill equips your child to step up kerbs in the street, single steps between different floor levels and other similar situations where there is no rail to hold.

How to Assess

Materials: A 30 by 30 cm square block approximately 15 cm high.
Method: Place your child in front of the block and ask her to step up or demonstrate the task.

Score *plus* if your child steps up to the block without touching it with her hand and without overbalancing.

How to Teach

Start your practice with a lower height and a larger area block. Your child could step up from a grassed area to an adjacent concrete area. The step must be significant enough for the child to notice the different height but not high enough for her to want to put her hands down.

Progress to a low kerbing. Stand in front of her and assist her by holding one hand at the level of her shoulder or below (not above her head). Holding her hand at a lower level will help her to keep her weight forward rather than pulling on your hand and leaning back. Gradually loosen your grip on her hand until she is stepping up without assistance.

Now attempt stepping up onto the block. Because she has to place her feet more accurately on the block, she may initially be apprehensive. Again stand in front of her as you did at the kerb and hold her hand if necessary, gradually lessening your support.

STEPS DOWN FROM A BLOCK UNAIDED

GM.C.102

This is the opposite skill to GM.C.101 and allows your child to step down from a higher to a lower surface where there is no railing.

How to Assess

Materials: A block, as described in GM.C.101.
Method: Place your child on the block and ask her to step down.

Score *plus* if your child steps down without aid and without overbalancing.

How to Teach

If your child still needs the support of your hand, as well as the rail, when she walks down stairs, reduce and eliminate this support now, before you teach her to step down from a block. Use the methods described in GM.C.99. Then progress to stepping down from a block.

As with all stepping-down activities the difficult point is to get your child to put all her weight on one leg and then to bend that supporting leg before gradually transferring her whole weight onto the other leg. It requires considerable strength and control of the thigh muscle, as you can feel yourself if you have to walk down a large number of stairs. The only way to develop this control and strength is through practice so the more times you can get her to perform the skill correctly, the easier it will become for her.

Watch that she doesn't keep that back supporting leg stiff and try to 'fall' off the top step onto the lower one. Initially you may need to place your hand around the knee to help it to bend and to stop it from collapsing once the 'lock' has been broken. Unless she learns to take all her weight on a slowly bending knee she will never be reliably safe on steps.

WALKS UP STAIRS, HOLDING THE RAIL, ALTERNATING FEET

GM.C.103

This is the mature method of stair walking and requires full weight bearing on alternate feet to allow placement of the other foot.

How to Assess

Materials: A set of stairs, as in GM.C.84.
Method: Ask your child to walk up the stairs. If necessary, demonstrate going up with one foot to each step.

Score *plus* if your child walks up the stairs, alternate feet (one foot to each step), with or without using the rail and without your assistance.

How to Teach

This skill is an automatic progression from GM.C.99, provided that the stairs are not too high. It is virtually impossible for little legs to step alternately over large stairs. Your local preschool may have child-size equipment on which you could practise.

If your child persists in using two feet to a step, guide her from behind to bring her lower leg up and past her upper leg, to the step above. She will soon get the idea and will discover that this is a much easier method of stair climbing.

CLIMBS UP AND DOWN A 1 METRE LADDER OR FRAME

GM.C.104

This climbing skill is related to stair climbing but involves some different skills. The child needs to be very aware of the position of her body in space.

How to Assess

Materials: A wooden or metal frame or ladder, at least 1 metre high.
Method: Ask your child to climb the ladder. Once she has climbed up 1 metre, ask her to climb down again.

Score *plus* if your child can climb and up and down without assistance, for at least 1 metre.

How to Teach

We will consider this in two parts — climbing up and climbing down.

Climbing up

Some children are born climbers and need no help with this skill but others can be very apprehensive and need encouragement and assistance. Try to find a suitable ladder or frame in a park or preschool and let your child watch other children climbing. Stand close behind her and use a verbal direction such as 'Climb up'. Before you start to help her, wait to see where she needs help. It may be that she happily moves one foot at a time but forgets to move her hands. It is not necessary for her at this stage to climb alternating her feet. Start with one of your hands over each of her hands on the rungs. She may not be gripping strongly enough to hold her weight — pulling up with her hands is as important as pushing up on her legs in ladder climbing. After she has stepped up the ladder, move her hands up one rung and wait for her to step up to the next rung. Continue like this for three or four steps and then lift her back down. Don't try to teach her to come back down until she can climb up without assistance.

When she is happy to climb up this way, start to release your support on her hands — she may still need verbal reminders to move her hands. Stay close behind her in case she loses her grip and slips on the rung. As you notice her confidence and skill increasing, move to the side of the ladder, just to be near by in case of a fall.

Climbing down

All your practice of stepping down stairs will be well rewarded with this skill. Stepping down a rung of a ladder requires the child to grip with two hands and gradually bend one leg while the other leg feels for the lower rung.

Stand behind her and guide her lower leg with one hand while holding your other hand over her opposite hand in case she loosens her grip. Stay close to her so that she doesn't get frightened. Initially try only two or three steps as she will get quite tired, from gripping tightly and 'dangling' on one leg as she reaches for the lower grip.

As her confidence increases, stay close behind but allow her to place her whole foot on the lower rung. You may or may not still need to hold one hand over one of hers for support. Eventually, just be ready when she climbs up, to encourage and prompt her efforts to climb down.

GOES UP AND DOWN A SLIDE INDEPENDENTLY

GM.C.105

Your child is becoming quite adventurous now and you may need great self-restraint to allow her to try such nerve-racking things (for parents!) as going up and down a slippery slide independently. The more opportunity a child has to use climbing and park equipment, the more competent she will become and the more able she will be in the Gross Motor area. This will be of great benefit to her at preschool as she will be able to join in all the children's games. Her general posture and physique will benefit too!

Of course, we don't want to discourage you from supervising her play — the trick is to do this without communicating any anxiety to your child!

How to Assess

Materials: A small slippery slide.
Method: Ask your child to climb the ladder, then come down the slide.

Score *plus* if your child can go up the ladder and down the slide with no help.

How to Teach

Scout your local area for some child-size play equipment. Perhaps your local preschool would let you use theirs, even if your child does not yet attend. Some toy libraries lend out large outdoor equipment as well as smaller toys. If there is no suitable equipment in your area, it is worth a letter to the Council, as such equipment benefits *all* children.

Regular opportunities to practise on suitable equipment is probably all your child will need to learn this skill. She may need help at first to seat herself at the top of the stairs. If she is worried about sliding down, be there to catch her at the bottom until she gains confidence.

WALKS UP STAIRS, NOT HOLDING THE RAIL, ALTERNATING FEET

GM.C.123

The child is now able to walk up stairs in an adult fashion.

How to Assess

Method: Ask your child to walk up a set of stairs. Avoid stairs which have a rise higher than your child's knee.

Score *plus* if your child walks up the stairs, alternate feet (one foot to each step) without holding onto a rail.

How to Teach

This skill is a natural progression from GM.C.103, where the child used alternate feet but was permitted the use of the rail.

She will still need to hold on when the steps are high, so you may be restricted to child-size equipment, which is likely to have a rail. Make a game of walking up without holding on.

WALKS DOWN STAIRS, HOLDING THE RAIL, ALTERNATING FEET

GM.C.124

This takes considerable control. When no rail is present, your child will still probably use two feet to each step — this is quite acceptable at this stage. When a rail is present, she can be encouraged to alternate her feet.

How to Assess

Materials: A set of stairs with a rail.

Method: Ask your child to walk down the stairs. If necessary, demonstrate going down using alternate feet.

Score *plus* if your child walks down with alternate feet, holding the rail.

How to Teach

Walking down stairs with alternate feet requires the child to hold her weight on a bent leg for a considerable period to allow the free leg to pass through to the next step.

It is important to use small steps when teaching this skill. If necessary, construct a temporary set of practice steps with bricks or planks and hold your child's hand in place of the rail. Help her to get the idea by guiding her moving leg through to the next step. This is hard work, so keep your practice sessions short.

Do not expect her to alternate her feet when no rail is present at this stage — unless, of course, she is holding your hand.

CARRIES OBJECTS UP AND DOWN STAIRS

GM.C.125

Stairs are no longer a barrier to the child — all her bits and pieces can now be spread all over the house!

How to Assess

Materials: A set of stairs and some interesting toys.

Method: Ask your child to carry two toys up the stairs, then down again.

Score *plus* if your child can carry the objects both up and down the stairs. She should not hold onto a rail. She may use two feet to a step coming down the stairs, but should alternate her feet going up.

How to Teach

Once the child has reached this stage of stair climbing, she is unlikely to need special teaching to learn to carry things up and down with her. The main thing is to give her opportunities to practise.

If she is very dependent on the rail going down, walk beside her at first with a steadying hand on her shoulder to give her confidence. Let her move slowly, using two feet to a step. She will soon get the idea.

CLIMBS UP AND DOWN A 3 METRE LADDER OR FRAME

GM.C.126

This skill is a direct progression from the other climbing skills in this sequence and shows how competent the child has become in the climbing area.

How to Assess

Materials: A wooden or metal ladder or climbing frame.

Method: Ask your child to climb up the ladder and down again.

Score *plus* if your child can climb up to at least 3 metres and down again, without assistance.

How to Teach

The first few times your child attempts a ladder of this height, climb up behind her. Once you feel she can manage alone, ask her to climb up and down while you wait at the bottom.

The hard thing (for you) is to walk away, leaving her to climb on her own. Once she has done it successfully a couple of times, you will be able to relax!

CHAPTER 4

GM.D: Ball Skills

Ball skills are important, not only to the child's ability to co-ordinate her body and her eyes, but in her social interactions. Balls figure prominently in the play of young children, and the child who is unsure of herself in ball games may feel 'out of things' and her self-esteem may suffer.

Some adults see early ball play purely as preparation for team games, or competitive sports, but this is a narrow view of the subject. With very young children, ball play is a good way to develop all-important turn-taking skills. For older children (and adults) ball games can be a means of good, healthy fun, with little emphasis on competition. Many schools are now providing physical education programs which concentrate on improving individual skills and confidence and fostering team co-operation, as an alternative to the traditional competitive sports.

Many of the skills in this sequence use and extend the child's balance skills, particularly her ability to transfer her weight from one foot to the other and to rotate her trunk.

Below we list all the skills in this sequence.

12 to 15 months

74. Throws a ball when sitting, any manner.

18 months to 2 years

85. Walks into a large ball, attempting to kick it.

2 to 3 years

106. Throws a small ball into a basket at close range, underhand.
107. Kicks a ball with a swinging kick.
108. Stiffly casts a small ball overhand, feet together, hand behind head.
109. Runs up to a ball, stops to aim before kicking.

3 to 4 years

127. Throws a small ball overhand, with twist.
128. Catches a 15 cm ball with arms.
129. Takes a running kick at a ball (may miss it).

Teaching of some of these skills can be started well before achievement is expected, so think ahead as you work through this sequence.

THROWS A BALL WHEN SITTING, ANY MANNER

GM.D.74

Perhaps you have already been playing ball with your child, as a turn-taking activity (as in PS.A.23). For this purpose, a push of the ball was sufficient. Now she can learn to throw the ball as you play these games together.

Throwing the ball, at this level, involves a deliberate letting go. She is not yet expected to control the direction or velocity of the ball.

How to Assess

Materials: A small, light rubber ball that your child can easily hold in one hand.

Method: Get a ball game going, while the two of you sit facing each other on the floor. If necessary, help her to throw the ball the first two or three times (or get someone else to sit behind her and help her). Then encourage her to throw it herself.

Score *plus* if your child is able to take her arm back and release the ball on the forward arm swing causing the ball to roll forward. She may take her arm back sideways underarm or overarm.

How to Teach

Start by giving lots of demonstrations, plus praise for successful attempts. If necessary, take her arm back for her, underhand, and then swing it forward, saying 'Throw the ball'. You may also need to help her to release the ball. This is not easy, so continue to give plenty of demonstrations as well. This skill is easier to teach if two people are involved — one sitting in front of your child to demonstrate and encourage, and the other sitting behind to give physical help.

Once your child is standing alone with confidence, teach her to throw while standing as well as sitting. Perhaps you could throw the ball gently back to her feet, so that she can practise stooping to the floor and recovering (GM.B.77).

WALKS INTO A LARGE BALL, ATTEMPTING TO KICK IT

GM.D.85

Here the child shows that she has a concept of kicking and can control her walk to the extent that she makes contact with a ball on the floor.

How to Assess

Materials: A light rubber ball, soccer ball size.

Method: Place the ball on the floor a few paces from your child and ask her to kick it, demonstrating if necessary.

Score *plus* if your child attempts to kick the ball, without overbalancing. The child at this stage will 'walk into' the ball and will move it forward by bumping it with her leg.

How to Teach

Begin by placing the ball at your child's feet, while she is standing still, and asking her to kick it.

Hold her hand to begin with, to give her balance.

When she can kick the ball from a standing position without your help, start placing it a short distance away from her, so that she needs to walk to it in order to kick.

THROWS A SMALL BALL INTO A BASKET AT CLOSE RANGE, UNDERHAND

GM.D.106

By now your child will be throwing a ball confidently when standing and she can be expected to have developed some aim. She can score *plus* on this skill if she can throw accurately to you — the basket provides a larger target than your hands.

How to Assess

Materials: A basket about 50 cm wide, such as a round laundry basket. A small ball, such as a tennis ball.

Method: Stand your child about a metre from the container and ask her to throw the ball in. Demonstrate if necessary.

Score *plus* if your child can throw the ball into the basket in three out of five tries.

How to Teach

It may be easier to start practice of this skill with a small beanbag rather than a ball; it would not bounce off the edge of the container as a ball would. Choose a stable container such as a large tyre ring, basket or large cardboard box and place it against the wall. Stand your child one step away from the container and after demonstrating the throw ask her to attempt it. Reward any effort she makes, retrieve the beanbag and encourage her to try again. On a warm day outside you may fill a bucket with water and use a plastic or metal object that will make a splash if she is successful.

As her aim improves, move her gradually back to 1.5 metres and start to use a ball instead of the beanbag. Don't allow her to get frustrated — it is better to reduce the distance of the throw or increase the size of the container than to have too many failures. Progress only if she is consistently succeeding at that distance.

At the same time, give your child lots of practice in throwing to you. You could also try drawing a target on a wall.

KICKS A BALL WITH A SWINGING KICK

GM.D.107

Here the child is required to lift and swing one leg to kick the ball while balancing on the other. This skill extends GM.D.85, in which the child was required simply to 'walk into' the ball.

How to Assess

Materials: A light rubber ball, soccer ball size.

Method: Place the ball on the ground near your child and ask her to kick it, demonstrating if necessary.

Score *plus* if your child is able to kick the ball in three out of five tries, using a swinging kick without overbalancing.

How to Teach

Start by standing your child with her back to the wall and kneel at the front and to one side of her. Place a large beach ball in front of the foot closest to you, and from the shoulder, lean her onto the opposite leg. Ask her to kick the ball and if necessary help her to kick the ball forward with the free foot. Change sides and try her with the opposite leg.

Once she has the idea, place her hands at her sides against the wall for support and kneel in front of her so that she can kick the ball to you and you can return it to just in front of her feet to kick again.

Change to a ball of different size and weight, using a smaller and smaller ball as her accuracy improves, until she can kick a 15 cm ball.

Next stand her holding onto a rail or the arm of a chair, with the ball in front of the leg away from the support; if necessary help her to lean over onto the supporting leg as she kicks the ball. Again, vary the size and weight of the ball until she can kick a 15 cm ball. Make sure she holds the support with only one hand and doesn't swing around to grasp it with two hands.

You can also use a flat wall for the support. Have her facing sideways to the wall with the hand on the supporting side flat on the wall.

To progress further, move her away from the wall and hold one hand behind the wrist. In this position you can vary enormously the amount of support you give her — from a firm rigid support to a very light touch which gives no support while she is standing, but is there to prevent her overbalancing.

Ask someone to kick the ball back and make a game of football out of it. She will most probably really enjoy practising this task and forget that she thought she needed you to hold her in her effort to kick the ball again.

In preparation for the next kicking skill in this sequence (GM.D.109) ask your child to kick the ball, walk up to it and kick it again, over and over again.

You can also encourage your child to kick the ball with more force, by drawing a line and asking your child to kick the ball over it. Gradually stand her further and further behind the line, to increase the required distance.

STIFFLY CASTS A SMALL BALL OVERHAND, FEET TOGETHER, HAND BEHIND HEAD

GM.D.108

Here we look at overhand throwing. You can begin teaching this skill at the same time as you are working on kicking (GM.D.107).

Your child will stand stiffly as she throws overhand at first, with her body facing in the direction of her intended throw and her hand held up behind head level.

Later she can learn to throw with a twist of her body; refer to GM.D.127.

How to Assess

Materials: A small ball, such as a tennis ball.
Method: Demonstrate an overhand throw and ask your child to do the same.

Score *plus* if your child throws the ball with one hand using an overhand throw.

How to Teach

Initially you may need two people for your practice — someone to throw the ball and someone to help your child to throw.

Place Dad or big sister about 3 metres away, facing your child. Give her the ball and allow her to decide which hand she wants to throw it with. Once she has decided, stand behind her and guide her hand up and back over her shoulder. Using the direction 'Throw the ball', swing the arm forward, helping her to release it on the way. Dad can then catch it and return it to you to repeat the action. If there is no-one else available to help you, throw the ball against a wall. Gradually reduce the amount of guidance you give the throw, until she is performing the movement on her own. It is important to have the right-sized ball for the size of your child's hand. Too big or heavy a ball will drop out of her hand behind her head and cause a lot of frustration.

Try to set aside five minutes for ball-throwing practice each day and you will be surprised and pleased at how quickly this skills develops.

RUNS UP TO A BALL, STOPS TO AIM BEFORE KICKING

GM.D.109

Once your child can take a swinging kick at a ball, she can start to learn to run up to a ball and kick it. This skill takes some time to perfect; at first she will break her run to aim before she kicks.

How to Assess

Materials: A rubber ball, soccer ball size.
Method: Place the ball about 3 metres away from your child. Ask her to run to the ball and kick it to you or to another person involved in the game.

Score *plus* if your child runs up to the ball and kicks it. She may pause to aim before kicking.

How to Teach

To give your child the idea, you may need to run beside her at first, holding her hand. It will help if a third person is involved, so that there is someone to kick towards and to take turns in the game.

Allow your child to pause and aim if she needs to do this in order to take a swinging kick. Otherwise she may just 'run into' the ball and bump it along.

Withdraw your help when your child has the idea.

Use every opportunity to let your child practise this skill with other children.

THROWS A SMALL BALL OVERHAND, WITH TWIST

GM.D.127

In the previous throwing skill, the child threw a ball overhand while standing stiffly, facing the direction of the throw. It is important that she learns to transfer her body weight if she is to develop a powerful throw.

Children often learn this skill while learning to play cricket or baseball. Many girls are, sadly, excluded from such games and hence never learn this effective way to throw. The ability to throw through a long distance isn't just a matter of strength — technique matters too!

How to Assess

Materials: A small ball, such as a tennis ball.

Method: Set up a game which involves throwing. Demonstrate the technique to your child and ask her to do the same.

Score *plus* if your child throws the ball in the following manner. Holding the ball in one hand, she turns so that her opposite shoulder is facing in the intended direction of the throw and her weight is over her back foot. She then brings the hand holding the ball up and over, transferring her weight to the front foot, twisting her body the direction of the throw and releasing the ball.

How to Teach

Stand behind your child and physically guide her through the movement to give her the idea. Use demonstrations as well. Perhaps another child could demonstrate.

Withdraw your help gradually.

Your child will discover that this technique helps her to throw the ball further and harder.

You can, of course, practise this skill in the context of cricket or baseball games if you wish. Otherwise, play throwing and catching games, or set up a target — a paddling pool of water is great fun.

CATCHES A 15 CM BALL WITH ARMS

GM.D.128

Catching skills are harder than throwing skills — hence their late appearance in this sequence. But if you have been playing ball games of any kind with your child, she will, of course, have had some opportunities to catch before now.

Catching requires a high level of hand–eye co-ordination, and will develop this co-ordination still further.

How to Assess

Materials: A light ball, about 15 cm in diameter.

Method: Stand facing your child and throw the ball to her, from a distance of about 1.5 metres.

Score *plus* if your child catches the ball in three out of five attempts. She is most likely to catch the ball with both arms, clasping in to her chest.

How to Teach

As with early throwing skills it helps to have someone act as a throwing partner, while you help your child to catch. Stand behind your child, lean over her and support her arms, bent to 90°, palms up.

As the ball lands on her upturned forearms, bend her wrists and elbows up to draw the ball to her chest. Initially use a soft ball that won't hurt when it lands on her arms and is squashed to her chest. Gradually increase the distance between the thrower and your child, from almost touching her at arm's length to 1 to 2 metres away.

Give your child a balloon to play with. Throw it up and let her catch it. Because it is light, the whole movement is slowed down and will give her a chance to co-ordinate the action more easily.

TAKES A RUNNING KICK AT A BALL (MAY MISS IT)

GM.D.129

In GM.D.109, the child was required to run up to a ball and kick it but a pause before kicking was acceptable. Now, a smoother execution of the running and kicking movements is required. The child should plan her aim before she starts to run, and should run up to the ball and kick it without stopping.

How to Assess

Assess as in GM.D.109.

Score *plus* if your child runs up to the ball, lands on the appropriate foot, takes the kicking foot behind her, swings through and kicks at the ball. It is the ability to plan and execute the movements in a smoother manner that counts at this stage, so you can still score *plus* if your child misses the ball.

How to Teach

Plenty of practice, following on from GM.D.109, will perfect this skill. Opportunities to play with other children or enthusiastic adults will help too.

REMEMBERING AND EXTENDING THIS SEQUENCE

Some ball skills which are usually acquired at the 4–5-year-old age level are:

- Catching a ball with the hands.
- Catching a 15 cm ball that is bounced towards the child from 1 metre away.
- Throwing a small ball within 15 cm of a target.
- Hitting a small bounced ball with a bat.

CHAPTER 5

GM.E: Jumping

Small children usually have a concept of jumping long before they are able to jump on their own. They enjoy being helped to jump, pretending to jump and jumping their dolls and fluffy toys.

Children with low muscle tone often find it very difficult to learn to jump, so the sooner they start trying, the better. Although the first jumping skill (jumping with support) is usually achieved at the 18 months – 2 years age level, you can start playing at jumping as soon as your child is able to participate.

The ability to jump contributes to the difference between the 'flat' walk of a new walker and the spring walk of the more physically advanced child.

Always teach jumping skills in bare feet first.

Below we list all the skills in this sequence.

18 months to 2 years

86. Begins to jump with support.
110. Jumps, feet barely off the ground.
111. Jumps over a rope on the ground.
112. Jumps from a block or bottom step, hands held.
113. Jumps in place unaided, feet apart.

3 to 4 years

130. Jumps forward over a rope, 4 cm off the ground, feet together.
131. Broad jumps 30 cm.
132. Jumps from a bottom step or block 20 cm high, unaided.
133. Jumps sideways, backwards.

BEGINS TO JUMP WITH SUPPORT

GM.E.86

This is the first of the jumping skills, which are so necessary for a fluent walking gait.

In GM.A.46 (holds onto furniture and bounces) the child demonstrates her ability to go from bent knees to straight knees while taking weight through them. If this skill is not familiar to you, refer to it now.

Bouncing with support (perhaps on a bed or trampoline) should be easy for your child now, but do check that she does this with bent knees. If she keeps her legs straight, refer to GM.A.46 and to skills from other sequences involving bearing weight through bent knees — especially GM.B.71, 77 and 78.

How to Assess

Materials: A flat surface at some height, such as a table or change table.

Method: Take your child's hand, demonstrate jumping and encourage her to jump.

Score *plus* if your child makes a deliberate attempt to jump. Do not expect her feet to leave the ground, but she should bend her knees and spring up.

How to Teach

Encourage your child to jump to you whenever she gets off the change table (if you still use one). Put her on her bed and ask her to jump off.

Don't allow her to just fall towards you; she must bend her knees and attempt to spring towards you.

If she does not bend her knees, place your child in the squatting position described in GM.B.91 (squats to play without losing balance). Once she is comfortable in this position, start to play 'Jack in the box'. Use a song such as:

Jack in the box,
so quiet and still
Can you jump up?
YES, I will!

At the appropriate point in the song, encourage your child to push up. Help her to succeed by holding her around the chest under the arms and lifting her in continuation with her push.

You will undoubtedly tire of this before she will — it establishes the idea of jumping as fun!

Gradually reduce the amount of lift you give and encourage her to push harder.

You could also try bending and stretching up in time to music and pushing off with the legs on a seesaw.

Continue these exercises until your child is bending her legs and pushing up in her attempts to jump, as described under How to Assess above.

JUMPS, FEET BARELY OFF THE GROUND

GM.E.110

This skill continues on from the previous item in this sequence. Now the child is asked to jump without any hand support.

How to Assess

Method: Hold your child's hands and encourage her to jump, demonstrating if necessary. Then ask her to jump without any support.

Score *plus* if your child is able to bend her knees and spring up without any hand support. Her feet may barely leave the ground and will not necessarily work in unison.

How to Teach

Continue with the methods described in GM.E.86, gradually lessening your support and giving your child opportunities to jump without any support at all. A lot of perseverance is needed to teach jumping, so don't despair if some time passes before your child can achieve this skill.

Maintain your child's interest by finding new songs and new surfaces to jump on — particularly surfaces which help her to get some spring.

JUMPS OVER A ROPE ON THE GROUND

GM.E.111

Now the child not only has to jump directly up, but must jump forward as well.

How to Assess

Materials: A length of rope.
Method: Place the rope on the ground and ask your child to jump over it, demonstrating if necessary.

Score *plus* if your child can jump over the rope. Her feet may not necessarily be together at this stage; she may jump with one foot in front of the other. She must bend her knees and spring forward over the rope.

How to Teach

Once your child can jump up, it is not so difficult for her to learn to jump over a rope placed on the ground.

Hold her hand at first, then see if she can do it alone. Once your child has the basic technique of bending her knees and springing without support, she will acquire forward jumping with practice.

JUMPS FROM A BLOCK OR BOTTOM STEP, HANDS HELD

GM.E.112

Here the child demonstrates a more difficult and advanced jumping skill. She is required to jump down from a height (with help) and to jump with her feet together. Note that you can begin teaching the following skill (jumping in place unaided) at the same time as you are teaching this one.

How to Assess

Materials: A block or step approximately 10 to 15 cm high.
Method: Hold your child's hands from in front and ask her to jump off the block.

Score *plus* if your child bends her knees, then jumps off with two feet together.

How to Teach

Kneel in front of your child as she stands on the block and help her to squat. Saying 'jump', support her hands and help her to jump off the block.

Initially, your child may go through all the motions and then step off the block. Try holding her around the chest, rather than holding her hands, to help her get the feeling of true jumping. If she continues to step, give her a verbal reminder — 'Not stepping, JUMPING' — and repeat the exercise. Make sure you finish every practice sesssion with a true jump, rather than step.

Practise jumping off the kerb, off the bottom step, off the telephone book and so on. You'll find lots of different situations for practicing and the more you practise the quicker your child will master this difficult task.

JUMPS IN PLACE UNAIDED, FEET APART

GM.E.113

This requires a stronger spring (and hence stronger calf muscles) than jumping off a block. It is more demanding than jumping over a rope (as in GM.E.111) because the child must now land with her feet in unison, though they may be wide apart.

How to Assess

Method: Ask your child to jump, demonstrate if necessary.

Score *plus* if your child jumps, unaided, with two feet in unison. Her feet may still be wide apart.

How to Teach

You will need to provide some support at first, as you teach your child to jump on the ground with her feet in unison.

Stand your child facing a hip-high support such as a small chair or coffee table. Allow her to lean forward onto the support, with straight arms. Lift her slightly from the hips as she attempts to jump, to allow her to feel the required movement. Remind her, if necessary, to bend her knees before she jumps.

Gradually bring her hands closer to the edge of the support, so that she is taking less weight on her arms and more on her legs. Then encourage her to jump without any support.

You can also try standing in front of your child, holding her hands. The higher you hold her hands, the more she will pull on your hands, rather than pushing on her legs. You can start with your hands high to make it easier for her, but remember to lower them gradually as she gets the idea. Finally, withdraw your support altogether and see whether she can jump alone.

You could use a Jolly Jumper to help your child learn to jump. You may need to lengthen or strengthen the supporting ropes. Place the jumper at a height at which the child's knees are bent when her feet touch the ground. The spring to which the jumper is attached will enhance the power of your child's jump and help a little push to go a long way.

Note that the Jolly Jumper should be used only under supervision. The child must not be left dangling in it for long periods, as this bouncing up and down could become a self-stimulating movement. Use the jumper only until your child is able to achieve an assisted jump, pushing off with her feet. Once she can do this, she is better off practising on her own.

JUMPS FORWARD OVER A ROPE, 4 CM OFF THE GROUND, FEET TOGETHER

GM.E.130

This is an extension of the previous skill in this sequence. The child's feet should now be working in unison and should be together rather than far apart.

How to Assess

Materials: A length of rope.
Method: Suspend the rope 4 cm off the ground. Ask your child to jump over it, demonstrating if necessary.

Score *plus* if your child can jump forward over the rope, landing with two feet together.

How to Teach

Assist with your hands to start with, ensuring that your child both pushes off and lands with bent knees. Reduce your assistance gradually until your child can jump over the rope independently.

BROAD JUMPS 30 CM

GM.E.131

This jumping skill requires a still stronger spring-off, and therefore stronger calf muscles, and better co-ordination of shoulder girdle, trunk and leg muscles.

How to Assess

Materials: A 30 cm wide mat or two marks 30 cm apart on a flat surface.
Method: Ask your child to jump over the mat, demonstrating if necessary.

Score *plus* if your child jumps the mat with two feet together.

How to Teach

By now your child is jumping with her feet in unison off a block and on the spot. She also has sufficient direction in her jumping to jump over a rope. This skill extends the direction in her jumping.

Increase the distance through which your child must jump gradually, from jumping over a rope to the 30 cm distance. Each time you increase the distance, give her some support until she can do it on her own. Work in bare feet to start with and then let her try in sneakers. Progress to school shoes (or other firm, leather shoes, which she will probably find hardest).

There are lots of opportunities during the day to practise this skill — jumping over the join between tiles and carpet, jumping off a mat onto the carpet, jumping over puddles on the footpath, jumping from the path onto the grass and so on.

Jumping is fun and after you have been practising for a few weeks you will find it impossible to walk straight anywhere — jumping over any change in the surface becomes a habit!

JUMPS FROM A BOTTOM STEP OR BLOCK 20 CM HIGH, UNAIDED

GM.E.132

At this level, the child should jump off the block with her feet together, and land with bent knees.

How to Assess

Materials: A block or step 12 to 20 cm high.
Method: Ask your child to jump down from the block or bottom step.

Score *plus* if your child bends her knees, then jumps off without any help and with two feet together.

How to Teach

When you demonstrate this skill, exaggerate your knee bending so that it is obvious to your child.

Continue on from GM.E.112 (jumps from a block or bottom step, hands held) reducing the support you give her until she is jumping by herself.

JUMPS SIDEWAYS, BACKWARDS

GM.E.133

In this final skill in this sequence, the child's control over direction in jumping is extended, so that she can jump sideways and backwards as well as forward.

How to Assess

If your child has attained the previous jumping skills in this sequence, she should only need practice and demonstrations to achieve this skill.

Practice can easily be incorporated into a game. Try 'Simon says'. Or draw some shapes on the ground and ask her to jump from one to the other without turning around.

REMEMBERING AND EXTENDING THIS SEQUENCE

Here are some jumping skills that are usually achieved at the 4–5-year-old level:

- Jumping over a 15 cm rope.
- Springing to jump from a crouch position (you could call this 'jumping like a frog').
- Jumping forward approximately 10 times in a row.
- Hopping.

CHAPTER 6

GM.F: Trike Riding

Teaching your child to ride a tricycle is worthwhile for the sheer fun it provides, but there are also other benefits to consider:

- It strengthens the leg muscles, and provides aerobic exercise.
- It gives the child new ways to use and extend her balancing techniques.
- It can improve independent mobility for a child who is otherwise unable to move on her own (such as some children with cerebral palsy).
- It enables the child to join in games with other children in the family, on the street or at preschool.

Trike riding is a difficult skill to learn but a very valuable one.

'Bikes' without pedals, which the child pushes along with her feet on the ground, are often assumed to be a preparation for 'real' trike riding, but this is not the case. They require a very different kind of movement from pushing pedals. A child who is used to these 'bikes' may find it difficult to learn to use pedals; she may persist in moving her trike along with her feet on the ground.

If you are buying a new trike for your child, make sure you take her with you when you buy it. It should preferably have a back support to about waist height. Check that your child's feet reach the pedals in their most forward position. The pedals should be quite large — as long as your child's forefoot. When your child sits on the bike leaning against the back support, her hands should comfortably reach the handles. The trike should have a wide back wheel base for stability. If you try to teach trike riding skills on a trike that doesn't fit, both you and your child will be very frustrated.

Below we list all the skills in this sequence.

2 to 3 years

114. Puts feet on pedals when pushed.
115. Pedals a trike, still putting feet to ground at corners.

3 to 4 years

134. Steers a trike around wide corners.

PUTS FEET ON PEDALS WHEN PUSHED

GM.F.114

To start with, you will provide most of the muscle power required to move the trike, while helping her to enjoy this new experience and teaching her to keep her feet on the pedals.

How to Assess

Materials: See the introduction to this sequence.
Method: Sit your child on the trike and place her feet on the pedals. Push or pull the trike for 2 metres.

Score *plus* if your child keeps her feet on the pedals for 2 metres.

How to Teach

Before starting, take your child to a preschool or playgroup where she can watch children playing on trikes.

An older sibling can also provide a model for your child — riding a trike with someone else makes it much more meaningful and much more fun.

Sit on the ground in front of your child on the trike, legs on either side of the front wheel and hold your child's feet on the pedals with each hand. Now gently rock the bike backward and forward as you hold her feet on the pedals. If she is happy with this movement, increase the distance that you push her to arm's length — backward and forward.

Next tie a rope to the front of the bike so that you can pull it and use some pieces of old stocking to gently attach her feet to the pedals. From in front, pull the bike towards you so that her feet complete a circle. If she is happy, then step back a few more paces and pull her to you again. Start your practice on a fairly slow surface such as grass or old carpet, and make sure that she never falls off while her feet are attached to the pedals — a sure way of putting her off bike riding!

When she is happy to be pulled for 2 or 3 metres in this way, remove the stocking from one foot so that one foot is attached and one is free. Again, pull her slowly forward — if the free foot comes off the pedal stop pulling and tell her 'foot on pedal'. Don't start pulling again until she puts her foot on the pedal. Continue this practice, alternating the free foot until she can hold the one foot on, on her own, for 2 or 3 metres. This may take many weeks but try to keep it a fun activity with other bike-riding children around. When she can keep the one foot on, release the other foot and continue your practice until she can hold them both on for 2 metres.

PEDALS A TRIKE, STILL PUTTING FEET TO GROUND AT CORNERS

GM.F.115

This activity extends the previous skill in this sequence. Here the child is required to pedal the trike on her own, but she need not yet be able to steer the trike around corners.

How to Assess

Materials: A suitable tricycle, and a simple course comprising two straight stretches (about 2 or 3 metres long) and a corner.

Method: Ask your child to ride her trike around the course.

Score *plus* if your child completes the course. She may sometimes put her feet to the ground, especially at the corner.

How to Teach

Your child should be able to keep her feet on the pedals, as described in GM.F.114 above.

Continuing on from GM.F.114, begin to pause while pulling her, and encourage her to continue the movement by pushing the pedals. It can be hard for the child to learn to push only with the forward leg (pushing with both legs will cause the trike to stop). Trying leaning over her from behind with a hand on each knee and helping her to push each leg in turn. Say 'push' as you help her.

Next try a very gently downward slope. Stay in front of your child, to pull the trike or slow it down as needs be. Gradually lessen your help until your child is pedalling on her own.

Then go back to the level surface, pulling her to help her get started if necessary.

Make your teaching sessions lots of fun, by involving other children and using songs and rhymes.

STEERS A TRIKE AROUND WIDE CORNERS

GM.F.134

This skill requires accurate control while riding the trike. It is a must, unless you are prepared to be constantly redirecting your child when she rides into obstacles!

How to Assess

Materials: A trike, and two or three obstacles, such as barrels or chairs, placed 3 metres apart.

Method: Place your child on the trike and ask her to ride it in and out of the obstacles and back to the start. If possible, ask another child to demonstrate.

Score *plus* if your child can steer the trike around the obstacles. Do not yet expect her to turn sharp corners.

How to Teach

First show your child how to use an obstacle course, if you haven't already used one in running activities.

Next use your rope (as in the previous activities) to pull your child around the obstacles, directing her to keep her feet on the pedals and to turn the handles. Your child has many things on which to concentrate in learning this skill! Reduce your assistance gradually until your child no longer needs it.

It is not necessary to use only formal obstacle courses when teaching this skill. Any bike-riding session can include some turning — there will be no shortage of naturally occurring obstacles! When other trike riders are around, encourage games of 'follow the leader', or let the children take turns at directing the 'traffic'.

REMEMBERING AND EXTENDING THIS SEQUENCE

Consider a three-wheeled scooter for your child. These are wonderful, fun toys which are very often overlooked these days. A year's fun on a scooter will equip a child to ride a two-wheeled bike without the need for trainer wheels. Scooter riding develops mature balance skills including one-legged balance.

Small Steps is an Early Intervention Program for young children with developmental delays. The kit consists of eight books, and an optional videotape program.

Book 1: Introduction to Small Steps
This introductory book presents the background to Small Steps, and suggests ways in which it can be used.

Book 2: Your Child's Program
This book explains how to select goals for the individual child, and how to help the child achieve these goals in the context of family life.

Book 3: Communication Skills
This book is concerned with language learning, at both the preverbal and verbal levels. Language is seen in the context of social interaction, and skills are taught through play and 'everyday' activities.

Book 4: Gross Motor Skills
This book presents the skills which involve the large muscles of the body. These enable a child to sit, crawl, walk, climb, catch a ball and so on. It has been prepared by physiotherapists experienced with young children with disabilities.

Book 5: Fine Motor Skills
Fine Motor skills use the small muscles of the hand and eye. They range from the baby's first grasp of the parent's finger to complex skills such as drawing and cutting. Also included are problem-solving skills and the development of concepts such as colour, shape and size.

Book 6: Receptive Language Skills
Receptive Language skills involve the understanding of the language of others. They enable a child to attend to what others are saying, to follow directions and, most importantly, to use language him or herself.

Book 7: Personal and Social Skills
In this book we look at skills that help children to relate to others, to play and to achieve independence in eating, toileting, dressing and grooming.

Book 8: Developmental Skills Inventory
The D.S.I. draws together the individual parts of Small Steps. It is a series of checklists used for assessing the child and as a guide for setting objectives.

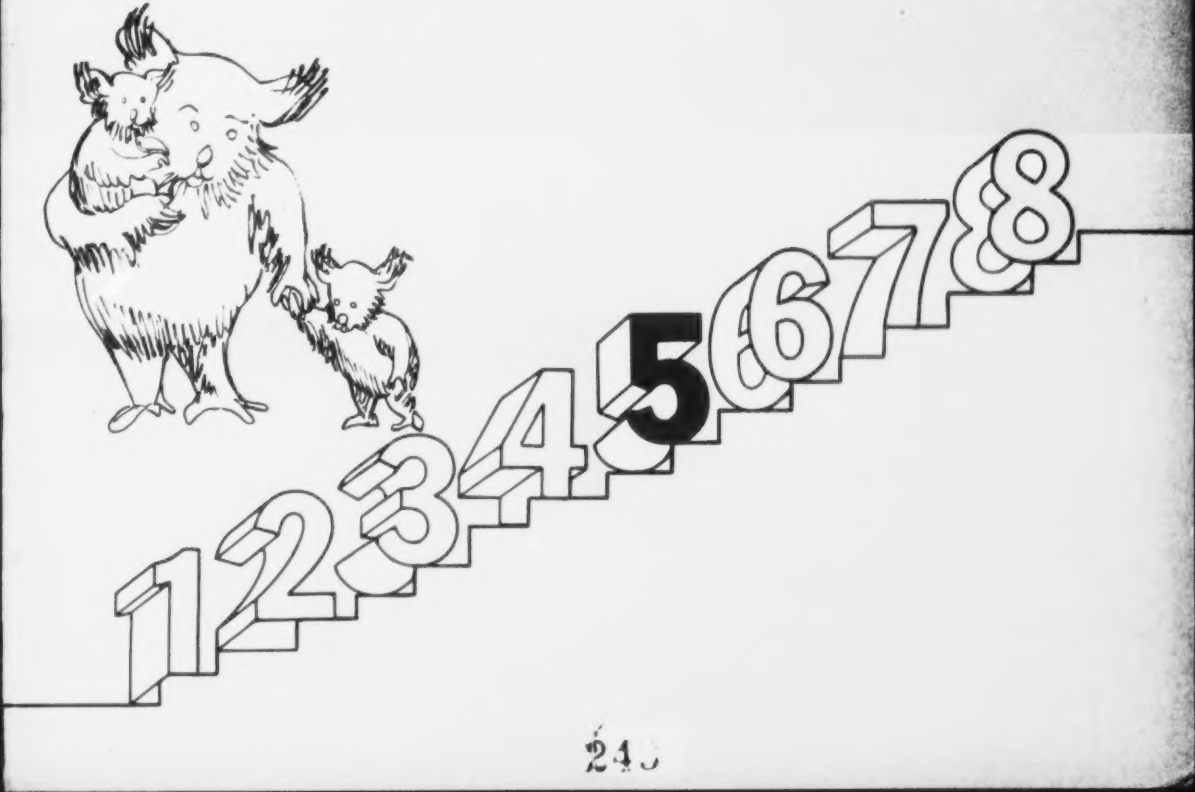
SMALL STEPS

AN EARLY INTERVENTION PROGRAM FOR CHILDREN WITH DEVELOPMENTAL DELAYS

Book 5 Fine Motor Skills

Moira Pieterse and Robin Treloar
with Sue Cairns

Macquarie University Sydney



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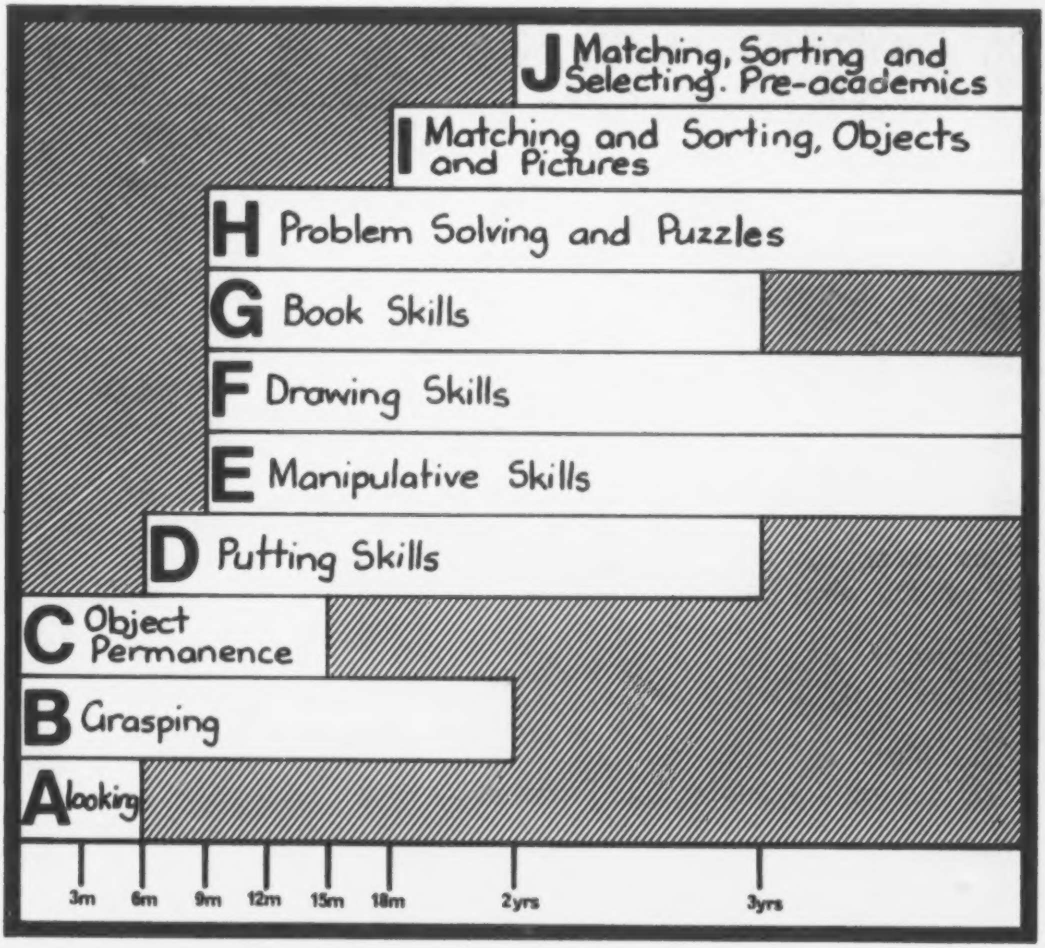
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H Problem Solving and Puzzles
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D Putting Skills
C Object Permanence
B Grasping
A looking
3m
6m
9m
12m
15m
18m
2yrs
3yrs

Introduction

Fine Motor skills are skills which involve movements, or combinations of movements, of the small muscles of the hand and eye.

We also include under this heading *conceptual* skills (such as the ability to recognise colours and shapes and to solve problems) and *preacademic* skills (which provide a basis for reading and number skills later on).

The sequences in this program are:

FM.A: Looking
FM.B: Grasping
FM.C: Object Permanence
FM.D: Putting
FM.E: Manipulative Skills
FM.F: Drawing
FM.G: Book Skills
FM.H: Problem Solving and Puzzles
FM.I: Matching and Sorting: Objects and Pictures
FM.J: Matching, Sorting and Selecting: Preacademics

The table on the opposite page will show you which sequences can be taught in parallel.

Why teach fine motor skills? It is hard to generalise about such a diverse group of skills, but here are some points to consider:

- Fine Motor skills enable a child to *learn more* about his environment, by helping him to explore, compare and classify.
- Fine Motor skills help a child to *achieve independence* in self-care. Doing up a button is, at one level, a Fine Motor skill.
- Fine Motor skills allow a child to express his ideas *creatively* through play and through artistic activities.
- Fine Motor skills can enhance a child's *self-image and social skills* by helping him to join in with the play and (at school age) the work of his peers.

Who might need specialised guidance? Children with visual impairment or limited control over movement will benefit from specialised help. A specialist will be able to help you identify the underlying purpose of each activity, and find a way in which that purpose can be met for your child. For instance, the blind child who cannot match colours *can* learn to match things by texture, weight and so on. This will give him a way to sort out and classify the objects around him, just as a sighted child uses his concept of colour.

CHAPTER 1

FM.A: Looking

In this sequence, we focus on the baby's ability to look at the objects around him. The baby's emerging ability to focus on objects, and follow them with his eyes, contributes greatly to his ability to reach out and grasp, and to use his hands to play.

We present looking and grasping as two separate sequences up to the developmental age of six months. But looking and grasping are so closely connected that even at this early stage you can work on both sequences at once.

The eight items in this sequence take the child to the point where he can look at very small objects. Looking does not cease to be important after this point, of course, but it is so basic to so much that children learn that it is no longer workable to consider it separately.

If your child's vision is impaired, you will be involved in helping him to make the most of the sight he has, and in teaching him to attend through his other senses. We strongly recommend that you seek specialist help with your visually impaired child. With adaptations and additional exercises, you will find that your child is able to learn most of the skills described in this book.

Below we list all the skills in this sequence.

0 to 3 months

1. Moves eyes towards an object and fixates for a few seconds.
2. Follows with eyes across midline.
3. Tracks an object 90° lying.
4. Follows with eyes vertically.

3 to 6 months

8. Looks from one object to another.
9. Visually inspects an object held in the hand.
10. Tracks an object 180° lying.
11. Looks at a small object.

MOVES EYES TOWARDS AN OBJECT AND FIXATES FOR A FEW SECONDS

FM.A.1

This means that the child looks at something (briefly) — a step forward from the seemingly unfocused gaze of the newborn baby. A parent's face is the first 'object' to attract the child's attention and remains for a long time the most important thing in his world. So this is where we begin teaching — using talking and smiling to encourage the child to look at his parents' faces. Once this is achieved, objects can be introduced.

How to Assess

Materials: Bright, colourful toys that make no sound.

Method: Shake the object slightly about 25 cm from the child's face, just to the side of his line of vision.

Score *plus* if the child moves his eyes towards the object and looks at it for a moment.

How to Teach

Use colourful objects — the more variety the better. Include a simple picture of a face (a hand-drawn one is fine).

Get into the habit now of saying 'Look' to attract your child's attention. He won't understand now, but he will in time.

Work through the steps below and select as your objective the step where your child first experiences difficulty. At the same time, work intensively on the early steps in Receptive Language Sequence A (RL.A), which will teach your child to look at you. You will find that some of the teaching steps overlap.

1. *Looks at your face*, when placed immediately in his line of vision, about 25 cm away (talk to attract his attention).

2. *Looks at a drawn face*, when placed immediately in his line of vision.

3. *Looks at an object*, when placed immediately in his line of vision.

4. *Looks at a face placed just outside his line of vision*, when you help him to turn his head by gently guiding him with the palm of your hand.

5. *Looks at an object placed just outside his line of vision*, when you help him to turn his head, as above.

If your child succeeds at all the steps shown above but still does not reach the main objective, make sure that you are giving him plenty of time to respond before you step in to help him. Experiment with different objects, and try placing the object closer to, or further from, his face. Spend time observing him to see what he will look at spontanteously.

Playtime and Round-the-house Activities

Make sure your child always has something to look at. Use a frame or drying rack to suspend objects around him as he lies on the floor or sits propped in his chair. Place objects in his cot or bassinet — a drawn face is ideal here. Hang mobiles in front of windows, so that the changing light pattern catches his attention. In the garden, place him where he can see the foliage moving against the sky. Place him where he can watch you — his focal distance is short, so trying putting his chair on the kitchen bench as you wash up. The best teaching times are when you are with him — talk to him as you change, feed and cuddle him to encourage him to look at you.

Remembering and Extending

Once he has mastered the skill of looking, keep providing him with opportunities to practise. Vary the materials you show him — your kitchen cupboards will provide a host of interesting objects. You can gradually introduce smaller things, with subtler colours. Try placing things at different distances too.

FOLLOWS WITH EYES ACROSS MIDLINE

FM.A.2

Once your baby is looking at your face, and at objects held in front of him, you can encourage him to follow the face or object as it moves. We start with just a small movement; by FM.A.10 your child will be following objects through 180°.

How to Assess

Materials: A bright toy, or your face.

Method: Hold the toy, or your face, slightly to one side of your child's midline (an imaginary line running down the middle of his body). Attract his attention, and when he is looking, move the face or toy a short distance, crossing over his midline.

Score *plus* if your child follows the object or face across the midline with a single, focused movement. He should not look away and then back again.

How to Teach

Start by teaching your child to follow your face. Move very slowly, talking all the time. If his attention wanders, wait for him to look back and then continue the movement.

Next try a drawn face, a noisy toy and, lastly, a quiet but colourful toy.

Playtime and Round-the-house Activities

Continue to show things to your child, as you have been, but now move them as well. Perhaps you could involve this exercise in your routine; for example, you could practise every time you change his nappy.

Remembering and Extending

This skill is extended in FM.A.3.

TRACKS AN OBJECT 90° LYING

FM.A.3

'Tracks' is another term for 'follows'. At this early stage, the child needs good head support to follow objects, so we teach this skill first in the lying position.

How to Assess

Materials: A brightly coloured toy, such as a red wool pompom.

Method: Place your child on his back — his face will usually be turned to one side at this age. Shake the toy until he looks at it, then move it slowly in a half-circle, through 90°. Move the object at right angles to the child's body.

Score *plus* if your child's eyes follow the toy through approximately 90°. He need not cross the midline.

How to Teach

You will need brightly coloured toys, some noisy, some quiet. Teach your child to follow the object little by little. If he can follow it through 10°, aim for 15°, and so on.

The first 'object' to use is your face. Attract his attention and, talking all the time, move slowly through the distance you have decided on.

When he is following your face, try a drawn face. Then try a noisy toy, such as a rattle. Lastly, introduce a quiet but colourful toy.

Always move very slowly, and give him plenty of time to bring his gaze back to the object if his attention has wandered.

Playtime and Round-the-house Activities

As for FM.A.2.

Remembering and Extending

A little later you will work on tracking through 180°. You can start now to gradually extend the distance, or you can maintain his current skill through practice until you are ready to start this new objective.

You will find it interesting to watch the ways in which he uses this skill in his daily life. He will begin to follow people as they move around the room, or watch people's faces as they rise from sitting to standing. It is important to position your baby with this in mind — let him spend part of his day propped up so that he is not facing the ceiling.

FOLLOWS WITH EYES VERTICALLY

FM.A.4

In FM.A.2 we were concerned with the child's ability to follow a horizontal movement. Here we see whether he can follow an object as it moves vertically — in line with his body.

How to Assess

Materials: A bright toy, or your face.
Method: Place the child on his back. Attract his attention to a face or object held above him, over his midline. When he is looking, move the face or object slowly down the line of his body, past his chin. Give three tries.

Score *plus* if your child follows the face or object through the vertical plane in at least one of three tries.

How to Teach

Teach and practise as for FM.A.3, but working in the vertical plane.

LOOKS FROM ONE OBJECT TO ANOTHER

FM.A.8

When a child first learns to focus on objects, he will appear to lose focus and gaze about in a random way before refocusing on something else. But as he develops, he learns to look purposefully from one object to another.

How to Assess

Method: With your child well supported, hold the two toys, one to either side, about 25 cm from his face. Attract your child's attention first to one toy, then to the other. Give him three tries.

Score *plus* if your child looks first at one toy, then the other, in at least one of the three tries.

How to Teach

Begin by encouraging your child to look from your face to a toy, or vice versa. Talk to him, and when he is looking at you, shake the toy to attract his attention to it. When he is looking at the toy, talk to him again, to attract his attention back to you.

Then move on to using two toys. Toys that make an attractive sound are useful ones to start with.

Playtime and Round-the-house Activities

This skill is easily practised during normal daily activities. Encourage your child to look from your face to his bottle before you feed him, and from your face to a squeaky toy at bath-time. When he is propped in his baby chair watching you work, pause from time to time to show him two objects — they can be objects that you are working with, rather than toys. When you can't be with him, make sure that he has two or more objects suspended near him, so that he can practise by himself.

Remembering and Extending

As your child gets the idea, experiment by holding objects at different distances, to challenge his focusing ability. Keep on encouraging him to look from your face to a toy; the skill of attending with you to an object or toy is important to language development (see Book 3, Chapter 2).

VISUALLY INSPECTS AN OBJECT HELD IN THE HAND

FM.A.9

When a child first begins to grasp objects, he may not look at what he is holding. Looking at a held object requires the ability to focus on something quite close, plus enough motor control to raise an object and hold it fairly steady.

How to Assess

Materials: A small, light rattle.
Method: Observe your child when he is holding the rattle.

Score *plus* if your child raises his hand and looks at the object for two to three seconds.

How to Teach

It is important to use a well-balanced toy: some rattles are very top-heavy, and the child can end up banging himself in the face when he tries to look at them.

Support is important too. If your child has difficulty raising the rattle, try cradling him so that you give some support to the shoulders and upper arms.

Note that most children inspect their hands before they inspect other objects. The positions in which he most readily does this will guide you as to the positions to use when you encourage him to look at held objects.

This skill can readily be taught together with grasping practice (FM.B.6, 12 and so on). Once your child is holding the object, help him to hold it for a few moments in a position where he can see it. Where necessary, help him by supporting his hands. Gradually withdraw your support. If he lets his hands, with the toy, fall out of sight, give him the opportunity to raise them again himself, before stepping in to help him.

If your child wants to put the toy straight to his mouth, let him have a suck on it first (this is another way of 'inspecting' an object) and then help him to hold it where he can see it.

Remembering and Extending

Once your child is holding two objects (FM.B.13), encourage him to look from one object to the other.

TRACKS AN OBJECT 180° LYING

FM.A.10

The child who can already track an object through 90° can now learn to follow an object from one side right across to the other, crossing over his midline.

How to Assess

Materials: A brightly coloured toy, such as a red wool pompom.
Method: As in FM.A.3, but moving the object through approximately 180°.

Score *plus* if your child's eyes follow the object smoothly, through approximately 180°.

How to Teach

As in FM.A.3 begin just over 90° and work up gradually to 180°. Some children have difficulty at first in turning their heads smoothly from one side to the other. You can steady his head gently with your hand, gradually reducing your help as he gains control.

Playtime and Round-the-house Activities

As for FM.A.3, building up to 180°.

Remembering and Extending

Encourage your child to follow you as you move around the room, by talking to him as you go.

As your child develops head control in the sitting position, encourage him to track objects in the sitting position too.

Once your child can track very confidently, he will use the skill in all sorts of ways, so that deliberate practice becomes unnecessary. But do observe him closely from time to time to make sure that he is using this skill.

LOOKS AT A SMALL OBJECT

FM.A.11

As your child learns to focus his eyes more accurately, he can look at smaller and smaller objects.

In this skill, you will use objects about the size of a raisin.

How to Assess

Materials: A raisin, or a similarly sized object, placed on paper of a contrasting colour.
Method: Place the child in a sitting position. Hold the paper about 20 to 25 cm away. Draw his

attention to the object by tapping the paper. Say 'Look'.

Score *plus* if your child looks at the object for two to three seconds.

How to Teach

Your small steps here will correspond to smaller and smaller objects.

Find the smallest size which your child will look at. Give him plenty of practice at looking at objects this size, then gradually reduce the size of the objects until you reach the raisin size.

Try using objects which make a noise, such as small bells. Brightly shining things can help too.

Be careful to place the object on a surface with a contrasting colour, so that the objects stands out clearly.

Playtime and Round-the-house Activities

Of course, you can't leave your child alone to play with small objects. This is very much a showing and looking activity at this early stage. You will find countless opportunities to practise. Flowers in the garden, coins, pieces of food, an older child's lego, shiny earrings — all are interesting to a child.

REMEMBERING AND EXTENDING THIS SEQUENCE

A little later (FM.B.23) you will be helping your child learn to pick up small objects. If you are not going on to this skill straightaway, continue to give practice at this current level. Watch your child to see if he is noticing smaller things for himself.

CHAPTER 2

FM.B: Grasping

In this sequence, we look at the child's ability to grasp objects, from the reflexive grasp of the tiny infant to the sophisticated 'pincer' grasp of the 2-year-old.

Grasping requires close co-ordination between hand and eye, and thus depends on and extends the looking skills presented in Sequence FM.A.

Grasping objects is an esential aspect of play; indeed, all the skills in this sequence can be regarded as play skills.

Below we list all the skills in this sequence.

0 to 3 months
5. Brings hands together.
6. Holds a rattle when placed in the hand.

3 to 6 months
12. Grasps a rattle actively.
13. Holds two objects, when given.
14. Reaches with two hands towards objects.
15. Reaches and attains objects lying.
16. Reaches and attains objects sitting.
17. Transfers a toy from hand to hand.

6 to 9 months
18. Rakes and attains a raisin.
19. Picks up and holds two objects.
20. Shakes a rattle actively.
21. Uses the same object in different ways.
22. Pulls a peg from a pegboard.
23. Uses the thumb and finger to pick up small objects.

9 to 12 months
28. Pokes at holes in a pegboard in imitation.
29. Takes an object from a container.
30. Pulls rings off a stick.
31. Uses a pincer grasp to pick up a raisin.

18 months to 2 years
61. Picks up pins or threads using a pincer grasp.

Note that grasping skills are practised and extended in Sequence FM.E (Manipulative Skills), which begins at the 15–18-months level of development and extends to the 4-year-old level.

BRINGS HANDS TOGETHER

FM.B.5

From birth the child will hold on tight to a finger that is placed in his grasp — a lovely feeling for parents! An early milestone, showing that the child is beginning to develop further, occurs when the child brings his hands together in the space above his chest. Because this milestone is important for Gross Motor, as well as Fine Motor development, you will also find it discussed in Sequence GM.A.

How to Assess

Method: Observe your child while he is lying on his back.

Score *plus* if he brings his hands together at the midline, to touch and/or hold. Do not score *plus* if your child only does this when you cradle him in your arms.

How to Teach

Guide your child's hands together from the elbows, giving him the feeling of interlocking and stroking his own fingers.

Although you should not be holding your child when you assess this item, you can use this position to help your child to get the idea; your body and arm will naturally bring his hands together. This is easy to do at feeding times; you can bring his hands together on the bottle or against your body.

HOLDS A RATTLE WHEN PLACED IN THE HAND

FM.B.6

It is a fine moment when a child holds onto a toy for the first time. It begins a new stage in his exploration of his world.

How to Assess

Materials: A light rattle with a pencil-size stem.

Method: Place the rattle in the child's hand. Give three tries.

Score *plus* if your child holds the rattle for five seconds before releasing in one of three tries.

How to Teach

Choose rattles or other objects that are light and well balanced. Some rattles are very top-heavy.

Help your child to maintain his grasp by stroking his fingers gently around the rattle. Make your stroking more infrequent as his grasp grows stronger.

Playtime and Round-the-house Activities

Place objects near your child's hands where he can feel them, especially when he is on his tummy. Someone who enjoys sewing might make your child a 'texture rug'. Simply sew on patches of different-textured fabrics (cord, velvet, hessian, fake fur, towelling, etc.) and firmly attach some large buttons, beads, old keys and other gadgets around the edges.

Make a habit of helping him to feel and hold anything suitable that comes your way. Keep offering him your fingers, too.

Remembering and Extending

As well as continuing through this sequence, work at strengthening your child's grasp by gently pulling your hand away as he holds your finger. Look for resistance as you pull toys away, too.

GRASPS A RATTLE ACTIVELY

FM.B.12

We look here at the child's ability to open his hand to grasp a rattle.

How to Assess

Materials: A light rattle with a pencil-size stem.
Method: Lightly tap the back of your child's fingers with the rattle.

Score *plus* if your child opens his hand and grasps the rattle.

How to Teach

Most babies will open their fingers when the backs of their hands are stroked gently down towards their wrists.

Begin by stroking your child's hands like this, and slipping the rattle in when the fingers are open. If necessary, help your child to wrap his fingers around the stem.

Once he is opening his hands readily when stroked, tap his fingers lightly with the rattle instead. If he still needs extra stimulation to grasp the rattle, move it a little against his palm.

Give a clear direction — 'Take' — each time you offer an object. Your child may not understand now, but he will, in time.

Playtime and Round-the-house Activities

As for FM.B.6 but now you are encouraging your child to open his hand, as well as to grasp the rattle.

Remembering and Extending

As well as going on to the next item in this sequence (holds two objects) look ahead to FM.B.15 and 16, where the child must reach through a distance to attain a toy.

HOLDS TWO OBJECTS, WHEN GIVEN

FM.B.13

Here is another way to extend the child's grasping skills. Grasping two objects requires active concentration.

How to Assess

Materials: Two small rattles or cubes.
Method: Place both objects in the child's hands.

Score *plus* if your child holds both objects for five seconds.

How to Teach

You may need to help your child to keep his fingers closely around the objects, while he gets used to the feeling of holding two.

Help him to raise his hands so that he can see both objects. If he enjoys it, help him to play by shaking and banging the two objects together (though it will probably be some time before he can do this by himself).

Playtime and Round-the-house Activities

When you can't play directly with your child, put toys out for him that can easily be grasped in two hands. A cord threaded with cotton reels is ideal, or perhaps a bunch of large plastic babies' keys or a chain of large, bright rings. Such toys are easier for babies to grasp in two hands when on their own than a collection of single items.

When you are cuddling your baby, encourage him to hold onto two of your fingers.

Remembering and Extending
Keep giving your child practice in this skill as you continue through the sequence. This skill will be directly extended when you reach FM.B.19 (picks up and holds two objects) but you can easily involve it in other activities in the meantime.

REACHES WITH TWO HANDS TOWARDS OBJECTS

FM.B.14

The child who has learned to grasp and hold objects can learn to reach deliberately through a distance, controlling the direction in which his hands move. This occurs first as a two-handed reach, as described below.

How to Assess

Materials: A colourful toy or rattle.
Method: Hold the toy about 15 cm above the child, and attract his attention by shaking it. Then hold it still.

Score *plus* if your child moves both hands towards the toy, within 20 seconds. He need not actually grasp the toy.

How to Teach

Begin teaching this skill by holding your child in your lap and guiding his hands towards your face. Let him play with your face.

When he is well supported on his back or in his baby chair, hold an object above him and help him to move both arms up towards it. This is easier if the toy is suspended, leaving both your hands free.

Gradually reduce your help as your child begins to reach independently. But do continue to help him to actually touch or grasp the toy, once his arms are raised, so that his efforts are rewarded.

Playtime and Round-the-house Activities

When you give your child a bottle, hold it above him and encourage him to reach out for it before you offer him the teat.

Ensure that your child has toys within reaching distance when he is left to play on his back or in his baby chair. He may succeed in hitting hanging toys, so that they swing wildly. Watch for signs of frustration with this; it may be necessary to fix the toys to horizontal elastic, rather than letting them hang.

Remembering and Extending
This skill is directly extended in the skills that follow.

REACHES AND ATTAINS OBJECTS LYING

FM.B.15

Here the skill learned in FM.B.14 is extended to the point where the child can reach out and successfully grasp an object.

How to Assess

Materials: A rattle or other toy that your child can hold.
Method: Place your child on his back and hold the object about 15 cm above his face. Ensure that he looks at the object. Give three tries.

Score *plus* if your child reaches for the object and grasps it in one of the three tries. He may need to sweep his hand around to catch the object — this is fine at this stage.

How to Teach

Supporting his elbow, move your child's arm until his hand is only 1 cm away from the object. Can he move his hand the rest of the way by himself? It he can, let him complete the last 2 cm by himself. Increase the distance until you find the point where he begins to have difficulty. Then plan a series of in-between objectives, like these.

1. *Moves hand through 3 cm to attain an object.*
2. *Moves hand through 5 cm to attain an object.*
3. *Moves hand through 10 cm to attain an object.*
4. *Reaches and attains an object without help.*

You may need more steps or fewer steps depending on the progress your child makes.

Always make sure your child is looking at the object first. If his attention wanders, stop and regain his attention before trying another object. Give a clear direction: 'Take.' Let him play with the object once he has grasped it.

Even if he is only moving through the last centimetre himself, guide his arm carefully and slowly up to that point so that he gets the feel of reaching through a longer distance.

It is important to practise this skill with both hands.

Playtime and Round-the-house Activities

While you are talking and cuddling, encourage your child to reach up and touch your face. Hair, beards and beads are favourite things for grasping! At feed-times, encourage him to grasp and hold his bottle.

Up to this point, your child may have enjoyed swiping at objects dangling in front of him. As he begins to want to grasp them, he may be frustrated by the way they swing wildly out of his reach when he hits them. This activity will again be valuable once he has learned to grasp, but for now, more securely fixed objects, such as shapes strung on elastic designed to fit across prams, will make things easier for him.

You will have spent so much time putting things into his hands up till now that it may be hard to remember to let him reach himself. Keep your objective firmly in mind, until it becomes a habit.

Remembering and Extending

Once your child has achieved this skill, it will be so useful to him that you won't need to plan special practice! Look for signs that he is reaching spontaneously. Gradually increase the range of things you offer him.

REACHES AND ATTAINS OBJECTS SITTING

FM.B.16

Proceed exactly as you did for FM.B.15, but with the child in a sitting position. When you are working with a baby, a firm baby chair with good back support will be very useful, as it is easier to be facing your child when offering him a toy.

Reaching and attaining an object can also be practised with the child lying on his tummy, either over a small cushion or bearing some weight on one forearm. This combines very well with GM.A.20.

Encourage him to reach up to the side, as well as forward, to develop his shoulder muscles.

TRANSFERS A TOY FROM HAND TO HAND

FM.B.17

This is another major developmental milestone which you will find in many assessments.

How to Assess

Materials: A rattle with a straight stem.
Method: Place the rattle in one hand.

Score *plus* if your child transfers the rattle to the other hand. You can also score *plus* if you observe your child transfering objects during play.

How to Teach

This will often happen spontaneously, without any teaching, as long as the child is given appropriate objects to hold and plenty of practice with earlier Fine Motor skills.

If you see no signs of this, you can help by working through the following steps. Note that we begin with objects that are easy to grasp with both hands, such as large plastic rings and sticks — a 15 cm piece of dowelling is ideal.

1. *Releases one hand from a ring to take a second toy.* Place both your child's hands on the ring, and offer a second object to one hand. Your child only needs to let go one hand to take the new toy, and still retain the ring.

2. *Transfers the ring from one hand to the other to take a second toy.* While he is holding the ring with one hand, offer another toy to the same hand. If necessary, guide his free hand to take the ring.

3. *Releases one hand from a stick to take a second toy.* As in step 1, using a 15 cm stick.

4. *Transfers the stick from one hand to the other to take a second toy.* As in step 2, using a 15 cm stick.

5. *Transfers a rattle from hand to hand, when the second hand is guided.* The rattle will be a little harder for him to grasp with both hands at once. While offering a second toy to the hand holding the rattle, guide his second hand into position to take the rattle. Give only as much help as he needs.

6. *Transfers a rattle from hand to hand,* as in the main objective.

Note that the method of presenting a second toy is not always successful — some children persist in dropping the first toy when a second is offered. In such a case, work through the ring, stick, rattle sequence, guiding your child's hands to transfer without offering a second toy.

RAKES AND ATTAINS A RAISIN

FM.B.18

Picking up small objects may be the last thing you want your child to do, and of course it must be done under supervision. But it is an essential part of the development of hand–eye co-ordination. It has many practical applications — in time the child will use this skill to feed himself.

A baby learning to pick up objects uses his hands like a rake — going over the object and sweeping it back into the palm of the hand. He also begins to use his thumb to direct the object towards his palm.

How to Assess

Materials: A raisin.
Method: Prop the child up in his highchair with his arms free. Place the raisin on the tray of his highchair and draw his attention to it.

Score *plus* if your child makes a sweeping action to rake and pick up the raisin.

How to Teach

Start by using larger objects — choose a size that will fit neatly into your child's palm. The objects should be spherical or cube-shaped rather than flat. You could use small blocks, toy farm animals or pegs from a pegboard.

You can hold the object on the palm of your hand or sit with your child on your lap at a table. We have found that the best place to teach this skill is in a highchair, where the parent can sit facing the child. Some highchairs have rails to prevent food from falling into the child's lap. These can get in the way and are best removed.

Work through the steps below and find the point where your child begins to have difficulty. This will be your first objective.

Always give a clear direction — 'Take'. Work with each hand.

1. *Rakes and picks up an object when the wrist and fingers are guided.* Gently supporting your child's wrist, move his hand over the object, and guide his fingers back so that the object is grasped against his palm.
2. *Rakes and picks up an object when guided from the wrist.* As above, but wait for him to close his own fingers around the object.
3. *Rakes and picks up an object when guided from the elbow.* Now you are helping his arm to move in the right direction, but leaving him free to position his hand and pick up the object himself.
4. *Rakes and picks up an object with an occasional guiding touch.* Let him proceed by himself, gently tapping his arm back in the right direction if he goes off course.
5. *Rakes and picks up an object with no help.*

Now repeat as many steps as necessary, using smaller objects, until your child can rake a raisin.

Some parents have found this difficult because their children take the objects straight to their mouths, resulting in a struggle to get it out.

This is a normal and natural tendency — all children like to explore things with their mouths.

Intercept your child's hand before it reaches his mouth and distract him by looking with him at the object, and/or helping him to shake it, or bang it on the table. Make a game of it.

If your child is already eating lumps of food, you could try this exercise with squares of bread (at mealtime), pieces of fruit and so on.

If your child can get small objects to his mouth, he has learned an essential eating skill. It may be inconvenient now, but it will come into its own later!

Playtime and Round-the-house Activities

Of course you can't leave your child alone to play with small objects, but involve them when you are there to play with him. He can now be encouraged to pick up all the small objects that you were showing him FM.A.11.

Remembering and Extending

Once your child has confidence in picking up small objects, you can try objects that are a little harder to grasp. Try, too, putting the objects in awkward corners of the highchair table, and letting him pick up off different surfaces — a slippery surface, a sand tray, a rough surface and so on.

PICKS UP AND HOLDS TWO OBJECTS

FM.B.19

Here you are extending FM.B.13, so that your child is not only holding onto two objects, but picking them up as well.

How to Assess

Materials: Two small blocks.
Method: Place blocks on the table-top in front of your child and say 'Take'.

Score *plus* if your child picks up the two blocks and holds one in each hand at the same time.

How to Teach

Materials: Any interesting objects that can be held in one hand.
Method: Children who have scored *plus* in FM.B.18 should have no difficulty in picking up one object. Draw your child's attention to the second object and direct him to 'take'. At first you may need to help him keep his hands closed around the first object. Give no more help than he needs and gradually help him less.

Once he is holding the second object, help him to play with the two together, for example by banging them both on the table-top.

Playtime and Round-the-house Activities
Encourage him to independently pick up a second object when he is holding one already. When he is playing independently, try giving him pairs of objects tied at either end of a string (15 cm or longer), or a 'necklace' of two large beads. When he picks up one, his attention will be drawn to the second by its movement. Practise, too, at mealtimes. Put several small pieces of manageable food on his tray. He will enjoy alternating between different pieces with different flavours.

Remembering and Extending
This will be used as the basis for many play skills, of which FM.E.35 (banging blocks together) is the first. You could start demonstrating this game to him now, and helping him to copy you.

SHAKES A RATTLE ACTIVELY

FM.B.20

When a child first begins to hold onto rattles and other objects, he is likely to inspect them with his eyes and mouth, and then perhaps to transfer them from one hand to another. He may wave them about, but this may be done in a random fashion — he has yet to learn that he can create an effect by shaking them deliberately.

When a child attains the skill of purposeful shaking, he reaches a new level of play. From now on he will experiment with all kinds of objects, to see if he can produce that satisfying outcome — a noise!

How to Assess
Materials: A small, noisy rattle.
Method: Give your child the rattle. Do not demonstrate.

Score *plus* if your child actively plays with the rattle, by shaking and waving it to produce a noise.

How to Teach
Teach this skill by demonstration and by giving physical help if necessary.

Try using two rattles, holding one yourself, and encouraging your child to shake by taking turns with your rattle.

Playtime and Round-the-house Activities
This skill is extended in FM.B.21 (uses the same object in different ways). Different ways of achieving effects with objects are also presented in Sequence FM.D (Putting) and Sequence FM.E (Manipulative Skills).

USES THE SAME OBJECT IN DIFFERENT WAYS

FM.B.21

In FM.B.20, the child learns that he can achieve an interesting effect through shaking. Here he learns that other actions produce satisfying results as well.

How to Assess
Materials: Bright, colourful rattles and other toys.
Method: Put the toys on the table in front of the child.

Score *plus* if your child uses an object in two or more different ways, such as shaking, banging it on the table or waving it about (do not include mouthing).

How to Teach
Teach as for FM.B.20, but now introducing different actions as well as shaking. Banging on the table is a useful second action.

Playtime and Round-the-house Activities
Try introducing songs and rhymes into your games — you can make them up yourself, emphasising the action words — 'This is the way we go BANG, BANG, BANG' — and giving plenty of repetition. Practise using objects in different ways in the bath — splashing is an ideal action here!

Remembering and Extending
See FM.B.20.

PULLS A PEG FROM A PEGBOARD

FM.B.22

Now your child can learn to cope with resistance when he takes things. A peg in a hole cannot be raked off a table-top, but must be pulled up and out.

How to Assess
Materials: A large wooden peg in a board. (It can be plastic, but we have found that plastic toys of this kind often have a tight fit. Look for a toy that allows free movement of the peg in and out while still requiring a little lift — such as a toy truck or

train with holes and pegs or peg-shaped dolls on the back.)
Method: Show the child how the pegs come out, and then direct him to 'take'. Give three tries.

Score *plus* if the child lifts the peg out of the hole, in one of the three tries.

How to Teach

You can teach this by starting with very easy materials and gradually introducing harder ones. Remember that the lifting action is quite new to your child.

Useful materials include small cups (for example from a nesting cup set) and 10 cm sections of dowelling, spoons, pegboards and/or peg-in-hole toys.

1. *Takes a stick or spoon from a cup.* Using the materials described above, direct your child to take the stick from the cup. Guide him, if necessary, to lift the stick up. Hold the cup firmly so that the child cannot take the stick by pulling it towards himself and tipping the cup over.
2. *Takes a loosely fitting peg from a board or peg-in-hole toy.* Find pegs which will fit in the holes a little more loosely than those designed for the toy. Proceed as above.
3. *Takes a peg from a board or peg-in-hole toy,* as described in the main objective. Proceed as above.

Playtime and Round-the-house Activities

Provide your child with toys of this kind at playtime. You will find many ways to improvise variations. Around the house, your child could pull a toothbrush the last couple of centimetres out of the toothbrush rack, take a spoon from a cup or pull a stick out of the sandpit.

Remembering and Extending

When your child has got the idea, present him with deeper holes and more tightly fitting pegs. 'Peggy Boards', which are quite tight fitting, could be tried now. A baby food tin makes a deeper cup. We have made much use of the tall, narrow, clear plastic cylinders in which packets of stock cubes are sold — these require a very definite upward movement.

USES THE THUMB AND FINGER TO PICK UP SMALL OBJECTS

GM.B.23

Until now, your child has been using a raking action to pick up small objects — grasping the object against the palm of his hand. Now he can learn that there is a more accurate and efficient way to pick things up. This is not the precise pincer grasp of the adult, in which the thumb and the tip of the index finger are used and the other fingers are curled out of the way. First he must learn to use all his fingers together as a group, holding objects either between his thumb and his grouped finger tips or between his thumb and the 'flat' of his index finger.

How to Assess

Materials: A raisin, or similar-sized object.
Method: Place the object on the table to within easy grasp. Draw his attention to it and direct him to 'take'.

Score *plus* if your child picks up the object with thumb and fingers in opposition — not with the palm of his hand.

How to Teach

Use any small objects that your child can already pick up using his raking action.

As your child reaches towards the object, gently intercept his forearm so that his hand is above the object but his palm is not touching it. Tilt his wrist slightly so that his thumb and index finger are closest to the table-top. Direct him to take the object. Gradually offer less help as he gets the idea.

Playtime and Round-the-house Activities

Your child may continue to want to use the other method for some time; he may need lots of practice to show him that this way is better. Mealtimes provide ideal opportunities for teaching, if your child is eating finger foods.

Remembering and Extending

As for FM.B.18.

POKES AT HOLES IN A PEGBOARD IN IMITATION

FM.B.28

This exercise will help your child learn to isolate his index finger — an important step in the development of a mature grasp. It leads on to pointing activities too.

How to Assess

Materials: A pegboard with holes at least 1 cm in diameter.
Method: Demonstrate by poking your finger into

the holes. Make a game of it. Direct your child to have a turn.

Score *plus* if your child isolates his forefinger and pokes it into a hole.

How to Teach

You will need holes of all kinds (pegboards, peg-in-hole toys, egg cartons with holes punched in them, boxes with holes and so on).

Demonstration is the most useful teaching technique here. Play a 'finger gone' game. You can also physically help your child by tilting his wrist so that the other fingers are held up out of the way. Say 'Point'.

Playtime and Round-the-house Activities

Try plug holes, holes in sand, the hole in a doll that has lost an arm or leg, the holes in a toy (or real) telephone dial, any holes that won't result in a stuck finger!

Remembering and Extending

Once your child can isolate a finger in this way, you can help him to point to objects or to pictures in books. He will use pointing in Receptive Language exercises, and as a way of communicating with others before he learns to talk.

TAKES AN OBJECT FROM A CONTAINER

FM.B.29

In this exercise the child learns to reach in over the side of a container and lift an object up and out.

How to Assess

Materials: A small block in an open bowl (such as a cereal bowl) of a contrasting colour.
Method: Present the bowl to the child, show him the object and say 'Take'. Hold the bowl steady on the table so that the child cannot tip the object out. Use a low table — your child should not have to reach up and over the sides of the bowl.

Score *plus* if your child takes the block.

How to Teach

You will need bowls with low rims, such as the base of a pot-plant container, cereal bowls and other containers.

If your child has difficulty taking from a cereal bowl, start with bowls with lower rims. Place the bowl so that your child can reach out and down to it. Guide your child's hand if necessary. Use a consistent direction, 'Take'. Once he masters the cereal bowl, present a variety of different containers.

Playtime and Round-the-house Activities

Put your child's toys into bowls, ice-cream containers and buckets. Let him take a biscuit from the biscuit jar or a clothes peg from the peg bag. Instead of putting his finger foods on the table-top, put them in containers.

Remembering and Extending

Once your child has mastered this skill, you will be able to combine practice at *taking* with teaching the new skill of *putting* (see Sequence FM.D).

PULLS RINGS OFF A STICK

FM.B.30

This is another exercise in which the child must overcome an obstacle to retrieve an object. Here he must lift the ring up to clear the stick.

If you are also working on Sequence FM.D: Putting, teach this skill before teaching FM.D.37 (places large rings on a stick).

How to Assess

Materials: A short stick (about 10 cm tall) on a base. This can be from a commercial ring-on-stick set, or it can be easily made with dowelling. Several rings — coloured plastic bangles are ideal.
Method: Place the stick and rings in front of your child. Demonstrate taking rings off. Encourage your child to 'take'. Do not allow your child to tilt the stick towards himself.

Score *plus* if your child takes off at least two rings.

How to Teach

This exercise is easier if the stick is tilted slightly towards your child, but do not tilt it so much that a forward pull alone is enough to free the ring.

Direct your child to grasp the ring and then guide his hands upwards, saying 'Lift it UP'.

Reduce your physical help until the reminder 'Lift it UP' is enough to ensure the correct movement.

Now work with the stick in the vertical position and gradually phase out your verbal reminders.

Playtime and Round-the-house Activities

All sorts of objects make suitable sticks when they are held firmly upright in your hands. Spoons, chopsticks and slender plastic bottles can be used. If you have large enough rings, your own arms can be used too.

Remembering and Extending

This movement becomes harder as the stick becomes higher. Consider whether your child is ready to learn to put rings on a stick — FM.D.37.

USES A PINCER GRASP TO PICK UP A RAISIN

FM.B.31

Up till this point your child has been using his fingers as a group when picking up small objects. Now that he has learned to isolate his index finger (FM.B.28) he will begin to carry this over into his grasping action.

How to Assess

Materials: A raisin or similar object on a contrasting surface.

Method: Direct your child's attention to the raisin and direct him to 'take'.

Score *plus* if your child uses a neat pincer grasp to pick the raisin (that is, he uses his thumb and the tip of his index finger in opposition, with the other fingers held up out of the way).

How to Teach

You may find that plenty of practice at picking up small objects (FM.B.18), combined with practice in isolating the forefinger (FM.B.28), will be enough to let your child discover the greater efficiency of the true pincer grasp.

Encourage him to watch as you pick things up, using an exaggerated pincer action.

If a physical prompt is necessary, gently clasp his remaining fingers back towards his palm, leaving only his thumb and forefinger free. This may be easier if you stand behind your child.

Play imitation games in which the tips of the forefinger and thumb are tapped together, or used to wiggle noses, ears and toes.

Playtime and Round-the-house Activities

If your child has learned to put (FM.D.36), scatter some corn flakes on his table and ask him to help you put them, one by one, into a bowl. Roll play-dough into little balls and let him pick them up and press them together. In the paddling pool, float small flowers on the water and 'fish' for them with your fingers!

Remembering and Extending

Please read the notes on the next skill in this sequence — FM.B.61.

PICKS UP PINS OR THREADS USING A PINCER GRASP

FM.B.61

The previous skill in this sequence, FM.B.31, occurs among the 9–12-months skills. Picking up a pin with a pincer grasp occurs among the 18 months–2 years skills. So you see there is quite a long time between the two. If you try yourself to pick up first a raisin and then a pin using just the tips of your fingers, you will see just how much harder this later skill is.

Given plenty of practice, your child will become more and more efficient at using a pincer grasp month by month. Once he has reached the 18 months–2 years level of Fine Motor skills, or if you suspect that he might score on this item earlier, have another close look at his pincer grasp.

How to Assess

Materials: Dressmakers' pins about 2 cm long and/or pieces of fine string or thread.

Method: Place one pin on the table and direct your child to pick it up. Repeat, directing your child to use the other hand this time.

Score *plus* if your child picks up the pins using a neat pincer grasp with each hand in turn.

How to Teach

As for FM.B.31, using smaller objects. At this level, you will probably be able to add extra verbal explanations.

Playtime and Round-the-house Activities

You probably won't be too happy about your child playing independently with pins, so here are some suggestions for other materials to use. Many of them can be combined successfully with craft activities, such as collage pasting.

Tiny pieces of paper (such as confetti), tinsel fibres, grains such as wheat and barley, pieces of ribbon or wool, tiddleywinks, matchsticks, uncooked broken spaghetti.

Pulling self-adhesive stickers off their paper backing is a good exercise too.

REMEMBERING AND EXTENDING THIS SEQUENCE

Once your child has mastered this skill, he has reached an important milestone in hand–eye coordination. As long as he has challenging activities to try, he will practise it, without prompting, in all sorts of ways. He will use it in play and, when the time comes, in his school work. It will help him to hold a thin pencil and to do up buttons and zips and buckles. The best thing you can do, apart from providing opportunities to practise, is to observe him closely from time to time, to check that he is still picking things up in the most efficient way.

CHAPTER 3

FM.C: Object Permanence

This sequence is concerned with the conceptual side of Fine Motor development. It is a short sequence, but a very important one — and one that is fun to teach and learn!

In the very earliest stage of development, out of sight is out of mind. When an object disappears from view, the young baby behaves as if it no longer exists. For him, the only 'real' things are the things he is seeing right now.

Gradually the baby begins to realise that things continue to exist once they are out of sight. He is learning the concept of object permanence. This is the beginning of what we recognise as memory and is the basis for later memory training.

We will present just six skills here, but you will invent many games of your own to develop your child's concept of object permanence. Look in the Personal and Social Sequences, too, for ways to involve people in your object permanence teaching, through games of peek-a-boo (PS.A.10, 14).

Below we list all the skills in this sequence.

0 to 3 months

7. Lingers at the point of an object's disappearance after following.

6 to 9 months

24. Finds a partly hidden toy.
25. Looks to the floor when a toy drops.
26. Removes an obstruction to attain the desired object.

9 to 12 months

32. Finds a completely hidden toy.

12 to 15 months

42. Finds a hidden object under two covers.

LINGERS AT THE POINT OF AN OBJECT'S DISAPPEARANCE AFTER FOLLOWING

FM.C.7

In the first six months of life, the baby seems to 'forget' about an object once it is out of sight. But quite early he may continue to look for a few moments at the point where something has disappeared, as if expecting it to reappear.

How to Assess

Materials: A bright, colourful toy or a line drawing of a face or a bright pattern on a piece of cardboard. A screen, such as a plain piece of cardboard.

Method: Attract your child's attention to the object at the midline position. Slowly move the object to one side, ensuring that your child is watching it. Then move it behind your screen.

Score *plus* if your child follows the toy and then maintains his gaze at the point of disappearance for two or three seconds.

This item is hard to teach — the main thing is to give the child plenty of opportunities. You can remove your screen, or move the object into sight again, to show him that it is still there.

FINDS A PARTLY HIDDEN TOY

FM.C.24

A very young baby cannot recognise an object when its shape is changed by an obstacle partly shielding it from view. The baby responds as if the original object no longer exists. This activity helps the child to learn that the object is still there — still the same — even when he can't see it all.

How to Assess

Materials: A favourite toy and a plain cloth —

preferably a familiar cloth in which your child shows little interest.

Method: After playing with the toy, cover half of it with the cloth.

Score *plus* if your child retrieves the toy from under the cloth, and looks at the toy, rather than the cloth.

How to Teach

Materials are important here. You will need interesting, favoured toys and uninteresting cloths. You may have to experiment to find the right cloth. Some babies have found every sort of cloth fascinating and we have used cardboard or sections of ice-cream containers instead. The latter can be held firmly and the child taught to reach behind them.

Teach by repeated demonstration and physical assistance, withdrawing your help gradually. You can start by hiding only a small fraction of the toy, building up until half of it is hidden. Take time to get a game going with the toy first, so that your child will want to find it.

Playtime and Round-the-house Activities

This can be practised with all sorts of things all around the house. Try putting Teddy halfway under the blankets in bed or half-burying something in the sandpit or pushing a toy car halfway under the living-room rug.

Remembering and Extending

When your child has mastered this skill, you can move on to the next activity in this sequence, and look as well at FM.C.26. You can work on these two activities at the same time if you wish.

LOOKS TO THE FLOOR WHEN A TOY DROPS

FM.C.25

A tiny baby does not look down when a toy drops out of sight. He has no notion that it is still there, down on the floor. If your child does not look for dropped toys, you can teach him.

At Macquarie we usually start teaching this skill once the child is working at about the 6 months' level, provided that he has sufficient head control in the sitting position to follow an up and down movement between his eye level and the floor.

How to Assess

Materials: A favourite soft toy (it should not make too much noise when dropped).

Method: Sit your child in his highchair. Shake the toy at his side, just below eye level. When he is looking at it, drop it so that it falls to the floor. (You can also have the child sitting on a lap, but it is hard for the person holding the child to see where he is looking.)

Score *plus* if your child tries to see where the toy went. He need not necessarily find the toy, but he must try to look down after it.

How to Teach

You can help in two ways: by starting with a toy that makes a noise when dropped, and by working up from a short drop to a long one. You will need toys that make a noise when dropped, such as those containing a bell, and 'quiet' toys.

If your child has difficulty looking to the floor from his highchair, you will need someone to hold him on their lap, positioning him so that he can lean over and follow the dropped toy.

Work through the following steps to find the point where teaching should begin.

1. *Looks to the floor when a noisy toy is dropped 15 cm.* Hold the toy at eye level, and maintain your child's interest in it as you move it slowly down towards the floor. When it is about 15 cm from the floor, let it go. If your child does not look for it, draw his attention to it on the floor — 'There it is!'
2. *Looks to the floor when a quiet toy is dropped 15 cm.* As above, using a quiet toy.
3. *Looks to the floor when a noisy toy is dropped 30 cm.* As above, dropping the toy from 30 cm.
4. *Looks to the floor when a quiet toy is dropped 30 cm.* As above, using a quiet toy.
5. *Looks to the floor when a noisy toy is dropped 60 cm.* As above, dropping the toy from 60 cm.
6. *Looks to the floor when a quiet toy is dropped 60 cm.* As above, using a quiet toy.
7. *Looks to the floor when a noisy toy is dropped just below eye level.* As above, dropping from just below eye level. Do not move the toy down slowly first, but do take time to ensure that your child is looking at it before it drops.
8. *Looks to the floor when a quiet toy is dropped from just below eye level.* As above, using a quiet toy.

Playtime and Round-the-house Activities

Spend lots of time dropping things!

Remembering and Extending

When this skill is mastered, go straight on to the next skill in this sequence.

REMOVES AN OBSTRUCTION TO ATTAIN THE DESIRED OBJECT

FM.C.26

Here is another activity to strengthen the child's concept of object permanence. In this activity, the child takes active measures to retrieve a toy that has been put out of his reach.

How to Assess

Materials: A favourite toy and shoe box or pillow.
Method: Attract your child's attention to the toy and, while he is looking, put the box or pillow between your child and the toy so that it forms a barrier. The toy should still be visible to the child.

Score *plus* if your child pushes the box or pillow away, or reaches over it, and retrieves the toy.

How to Teach

Encourage your child to take the toy by saying 'Here's . . . Can you take it?' If necessary, guide his hand to push the barrier away, or reach over the top of it.

Playtime and Round-the-house Activities

This game can easily be fitted into normal daily routines. It could be played with Teddy and a pillow at bedtime, or with a rubber duck and a plastic plate in the bath. There are many variations. Try 'hiding' a toy under a clear plastic container or behind the clear lid of a shirt box. Cut a window in a piece of cardboard and cover it with cellophane. Then a favourite doll can appear at the window, perhaps appearing and disappearing in a game of peek-a-boo. You could put a barrier between your face and the child's too, and wait for him to remove it, peeping over the top from time to time to encourage him. Refer again to the early peek-a-boo activities in the Personal and Social Sequences (PS.A.10, 14).

Remembering and Extending

The next step is to have the toy completely hidden, so this activity leads on naturally to that described in FM.C.32.

FINDS A COMPLETELY HIDDEN TOY

FM.C.32

Now your child can learn to find objects that have gone from sight entirely. When he does this he shows he knows that the object still exists even though he cannot see it.

How to Assess

As for FM.C.24 or 26, except that now the object is completely hidden from view. Let him play with it first, and watch as you hide it.

How to Teach

You can teach this skill in the same way as FM.C.24, except that now you will build up from partially hiding the toy, to hiding it completely. Alternatively, you could teach the skill through activities like those described in FM.C.26, hiding the toy completely from your child's view.

Playtime and Round-the-house Activities

When your child has mastered this skill, you can try some more challenging variations. Refer to the last skill in this sequence, FM.C.42.

FINDS A HIDDEN OBJECT UNDER TWO COVERS

FM.C.42

The child's concept of object permanence is well established by the time this level is reached. This activity is designed to encourage the child to 'keep track' of an object through a more complex series of events. The skills of persisting, and trying again if necessary, are also strengthened.

How to Assess

Materials: A favourite toy. Two pieces of cloth, about 30 cm square. Upturned containers or cardboard screens could also be used.
Method: Put the cloths on the table, side by side. Hide the toy under one cloth several times, letting your child retrieve it each time. Now hide the toy under the second cloth.

Score *plus* if your child finds the toy under the second cloth.

How to Teach

When you first introduce this game, proceed very slowly and deliberately, drawing your child's attention to each move you make.

If he looks under the wrong cloth, say 'It's not there. Where could it be?' Give your child time to look under the cloth himself, before stepping in to help him.

Keep in mind when teaching that the skills of persisting after a mistake, and trying other alternatives, are important skills in their own right and should be strongly reinforced. Avoid saying 'No' or 'You're wrong' when your child looks under the empty cover. Respond in a way that will encourage your child to have another try.

Playtime and Round-the-house Activities

This game is great fun when played with pillows on the floor — or better still, on a big bed! You can use large boxes, or the cushions on the lounge, if your child can lift them. What about putting a picture or photograph into one of two envelopes? Or putting a sandwich under one of two dishes on the table? You will find many variations of your own.

REMEMBERING AND EXTENDING THIS SEQUENCE

Hide-and-seek games have an important role throughout the preschool years. Here are some challenging variations.

Put a toy under one of two indentical containers, while your child watches. Then move the containers around. Can your child identify the right container? If he goes to the wrong one first, does he then look under the other one? Later, you could try this with three containers. As a special treat, play this game with small pieces of food.

Encourage your child to take a turn at hiding a toy — you do the looking.

This game can be played on the floor or sitting at a large table. Attach long pieces of string or wool to one end of two or three egg cartons, to make 'trains'. Put a toy or treat into one of the trains and give the ends of the strings to your child. See if he can pull the train carrying the treat towards himself.

Hide three small treats around the room, while your child watches. Then see if he can remember where all the treats are. (Don't use foods items that take a long time to eat or he may lose interest.)

The older preschooler will enjoy the traditional game of hide-and-seek, especially if all the family joins in.

CHAPTER 4

FM.D: Putting

Very young babies release objects spontaneously, when they lose interest in them, but cannot plan to release, or let something go at somebody's request. Learning to put deliberately represents a big step forward in the child's control of his hands. And putting with precise aim demands fine co-ordination of hand and eye.

Many children teach themselves to release deliberately — at least to the level of releasing objects with wrist support (FM.D.27). Your child may take to leaning his arm on his highchair tray and dropping things over the side — watching you pick them up is half the fun! If your child does this, assess to find out the point he has reached in this sequence, and begin teaching there.

If deliberate putting has not yet begun, you can start to teach it (beginning with FM.D.27) once your child has reached the 6 months' level in Sequence FM.B: Grasping.

Note that in teaching putting you will be teaching your child to follow a new direction — 'Put'. If you use this direction right from the beginning, it will soon help your child to know what is required of him.

The skills below will take your child gradually from the first deliberate release to highly controlled, precisely aimed putting.

Below we list all the skills in this sequence.

6 to 9 months

27. Releases an object when the wrist is supported.

9 to 12 months

36. Puts objects into a bowl.
37. Places large rings on a stick.
38. Places a peg in a can.

12 to 15 months

43. Puts a large peg in a pegboard.
44. Puts a circle in the formboard (no choice).
45. Builds a tower of two cubes.

18 months to 2 years

62. Builds a tower of six cubes.

2 to 3 years

96. Builds a tower of eight cubes.
97. Puts six small pegs in a pegboard.

Note that these putting skills are applied and extended in Sequences FM.E: Manipulative Skills and FM.H: Problem Solving and Puzzles and in many activities from other sequences.

RELEASES AN OBJECT WHEN THE WRIST IS SUPPORTED

FM.D.27

Deliberate releasing is easiest for the child when he is supported at the wrist — either by your hand or by a flat surface such as a table-top.

How to Assess

Materials: A small, easily held object.
Method: When your child is holding the object, support his wrist or place his closed hand on the table top. Say 'Put'.

Score *plus* if your child releases the object.

How to Teach

Use a clear direction — 'Put' — right from the beginning. Proceed as described under How to Assess. If your child does not release the object, repeat your direction, gently stroking his hand to stimulate the release. (Experiment with different ways of stroking until you find the way which works for you.)

Your stroking can become lighter as your child gets the idea, until finally he responds to your direction alone.

Playtime and Round-the-house Activities

You will find many opportunities to practise this skill each day, by simply using whatever comes to hand — small stones in the garden, an older brother or sister's small toys, odds and ends in the kitchen. Let your hand be the flat surface sometimes.

Remembering and Extending

Maintain with practice until you are ready to go on to FM.D.36, where your child will learn to put objects into a container. As you practise, look for signs that your child is becoming less dependent on wrist support.

PUTS OBJECTS INTO A BOWL

FM.D.36

Once the child can release voluntarily onto a flat surface he can learn to purposefully drop an object from a height — that is, without wrist support.

How to Assess

Materials: A small block and an open bowl (such as a cereal bowl).

Method: After your child has taken the block out, position the bowl so that he must reach about 8 cm and say 'Put'. Give three tries.

Score *plus* if your child reaches, puts the object in and releases it, in one of the three tries.

How to Teach

You will need a variety of small objects and open containers.

Objects and/or containers that cause a satisfying noise are particularly useful, if you are lucky enough to find them.

Work through the following steps, and begin teaching at the point where your child begins to have difficulty. Always give a clear direction: 'Put'. Taking turns helps too.

1. *Releases an object when the hand is positioned directly above the bowl and the release is physically prompted.* Give your child the object, and hold his hand directly over the bowl. Stimulate the release by gently stroking the back of his hand while supporting his wrist.

2. *Releases the object when the hand is positioned directly over the bowl,* supported from the elbow. Omit the wrist support and stroking in this step.

3. *Reaches through 4 cm and releases an object into the bowl.* The rim of the bowl should be just beyond your child's hand. Guide him if necessary with the lightest possible touch to the back of the elbow, reducing your assistance as he gets the idea.

4. *Reaches through 6 cm and releases an object into the bowl.* Now hold the bowl just that little bit further away. Make sure he looks at the bowl. Try a demonstration before you given him any physical help.

5. *Reaches through 8 cm and releases an object into the bowl*, as in the main objective.

If during step 3, 4 or 5 your child releases too early, show no response — give him the object again and repeat the exercise. If he persists in releasing too early, go back to step 2 and give him lots of praise for succeeding. Then move the bowl away again.

As this is a completely new kind of activity for him, he needs clear indications from you as to what is required. The best way to show him is to reserve your responsiveness for successful putting.

Playtime and Round-the-house Activities

If, while teaching taking (FM.B.29), you have organised your child's toys into containers, your play area will be well set up for practising putting. Note that many children find it easier to put into containers on the floor than to put into containers at table level.

It is fun to practise deliberate dropping where no aim is involved. Take turns with your baby dropping things from a height and watching where they land. Dropping things into containers of water creates a lovely splash.

Remembering and Extending

Once your child has mastered this skill you can introduce some more challenging containers. As well as the peg-and-can activity described in FM.D.38 you could try some of the ideas following.

A marble makes a fascinating noise when it is dropped into a cream bottle. Close supervision is needed of course.

A posting box can be improvised by cutting a hole in the lid of an ice-cream container or a shoe box. The lid can then be removed to retrieve the toy. Most ready-made posting boxes have too many holes for this level of development, but you could always tape over all but the round one.

Put a golf or ping-pong ball in one end of a cardboard cylinder and watch it roll out the other end. Or attach an orange bag at one end to which you have sewn some little bells, so the dropped object makes them jingle.

Put containers to the side of your child, as well as straight in front to encourage accurate aiming.

PLACES LARGE RINGS ON A STICK

FM.D.37

This activity teaches a different kind of reaching and aiming. It can be taught once the child has mastered FM.B.30 (pulls rings off a stick).

Note that many commerically available ring-on-stick sets have a stick which is too high, requiring the child to reach up and over — a harder skill. The stick should come no higher than the child's chest-height when it is placed on a firm surface in front of him. If necessary, cut the stick down to about 10 cm, or make your own set with a piece of dowelling.

How to Assess
Materials: A short stick (about 10 cm tall) on a base.
Method: Place the base in front of your child, and demonstrate the putting action. Give him a ring and direct him to 'put'. He should not have to reach through more than about 5 cm.

Score *plus* if your child moves the ring across the stick and drops it on. He should do this three times.

How to Teach
This skill can be taught in three steps.

1. *Releases a ring onto a stick when guided to hold hand above.* Guide your child's hand above the stick, and say 'Put'. If he does not release, use the stroking action described in FM.D.36.
2. *Reaches the ring towards the stick and drops it on, when helped to grasp the ring at the correct angle.* The problem here is frequently not so much arriving at the right place, as holding the ring at the right angle. Before your child aims towards the stick, make sure that it is positioned in his hand horizontally to the table.
3. *Places a ring on the stick without help*, as in the main objective. Now he must aim and position the ring himself.

In all steps, remember to practise with each hand.

For some reason, this activity has become something of a bugbear to many teachers and parents involved in early intervention programs. It seems that many children just don't like this task, or is it that they sense the hesitance of their teachers? One mistake we have seen is that children are asked to put on ring after ring in unbroken succession, without the chance to really play with the materials. Let your child explore them, both within and outside special teaching times. You can create an exciting effect by making the rings twirl around the stick. The ideas below may also help to combine learning this skill with fun. But if your child continues to dislike this (or any other) activity, substitute another putting activity which achieves the same goal of co-ordinating hand and eye.

Playtime and Round-the-house Activities
Use your arm, with forefinger extended, as the 'stick'. Use a broom handle at a slight angle and watch the rings slide down to the floor. Egg rings make a lovely clatter on a piece of metal pipe. Drop coits over a stake in the garden.

Remembering and Extending
There are many commercially available toys which incorporate this skill, at many levels of difficulty. Once your child has mastered the loose-fitting rings, look for toys with the challenge of a tighter fit or a taller stick. Let your child hang things on hooks too. If he enjoys his tea-set, perhaps you could fix a row of cup hooks in his play corner.

PLACES A PEG IN A CAN

FM.D.38

Here the child must aim for the container, and then turn his wrist so that the peg goes in. Releasing above the can will not guarantee that the peg goes in.

How to Assess
Materials: A piece of dowelling or stick 10 to 15 cm long. A small can (such as a baby food can) or cup.
Method: Put the can on the highchair tray in front of your child and demonstrate how the stick goes in. Give the stick to your child and say 'Put'. Give three tries.

Score *plus* if your child puts the stick in the can. He should do this in at least two of the three tries.

How to Teach
Some children learn to put the peg in by turning it so that it is vertical, and then dropping it. Others learn to place the end of the stick inside the rim of the can, and then to push the stick down so that it stays there when released. The latter method is more useful when it comes to smaller holes and tightly fitting sticks, but the first way can be accepted at this stage if it works for your child.

Decide on your strategy, and teach by physically prompting your child, gradually withdrawing your help until the skill is mastered.

Playtime and Round-the-house Activities
Spoons and toothbrushes can be put into cups. If you used a posting box in FM.D.36 try it now

with a stick instead of a ball. Hold the cardboard tube from a toilet roll and let your child drop sticks through the tube onto the floor.

Remembering and Extending

Try some narrower containers, such as the clear plastic cylinders in which stock cubes are sold. If you have a very loose fitting peg-in-hole toy, you could introduce it now. This skill will be extended in the next skill in this sequence. Introduce increasingly challenging materials until this next objective is met.

PUTS A LARGE PEG IN A PEGBOARD

FM.D.43

This is an extension of FM.D.38. Your child may not be ready yet for a very tight fit, but this skill does require an accurate aim.

How to Assess

Materials: A wooden pegboard or peg-in-hole toy into which dowelling-sized pegs will fit fairly freely.

Method: Demonstrate the action to your child and then give him a peg, saying 'Put'.

Score *plus* if your child puts the peg in the hole at least three times.

How to Teach

Your child should be guiding the peg in, rather than simply dropping it.

Experiment with different containers until you find the level at which your child can succeed now. Then find a container that is just a little narrower, and so on, until you reach the level described above.

Teach by giving physical assistance, which you gradually withdraw as your child learns the skill.

Looking is crucial to this activity, so remind your child to look if his attention wanders.

Once he has put the peg in, let him play with the materials for a moment before trying again.

Playtime and Round-the-house Activities

Look for things with holes, or make them in boxes or plastic containers. You can now use smaller holes than those used in the extension activities in FM.D.36. As well as pegs, you can use spoons, clothes pegs, kitchen implements and so on.

Remembering and Extending

Once your child has mastered this skill, he can try pegs with a tighter fit. Peggy Boards which have holes in the tops of the pegs as well are good value, as later on your child will be able to build towers with them.

This is the last of the peg-in-hole skills directly taught in this program. Although your child will use his aiming skills in other ways, we suggest that you return to this activity from time to time to check that he has retained the skill.

PUTS A CIRCLE IN THE FORMBOARD (NO CHOICE)

FM.D.44

Here is another kind of putting skill — that of pushing a flat shape into a hole. Later this skill will be used in doing jigsaw puzzles.

Puzzles are taught in Sequence FM.H (Problem Solving and Puzzles) — really, this and other early puzzles skills belong to both the Puzzle and the Putting sequences. But we find it best to teach this very first puzzle skill here and now, among the putting skills.

Once your child has mastered this skill, you can continue with Sequence FM.D and start teaching the puzzle skills in FM.H.

We discuss in detail the problem of finding suitable beginner puzzles in Sequence FM.H. For this particular item there is a fairly simple way around this problem. It is not absolutely necessary that your board has a base, so ask your handyperson to cut a round hole in a piece of particle board, and make a round shape that is fractionally smaller. Sand the edges and paint if you want to. You will work with the board flat on the table, so it doesn't matter that the shape can fall through when the board is lifted.

How to Assess

Materials: A formboard (puzzle) with circles about 6 to 8 cm in diameter. If you are using a formboard with other shapes as well, keep those pieces in. Your child should not have to choose which hole to put the piece in.

Method: Place the board on a table-top, and demonstrate pushing the shape into the hole. Give the shape to your child and say 'Put'.

Score *plus* if your child pushes the circle right into the hole at least three times. If the fit is very tight you can help your child to push it down into the hole, but he must position it himself.

How to Teach

As well as the materials described above it is helpful to have some smaller circle shapes that fit into the hole very easily. Try using lids.

Help your child to push the shape in, using the small shapes first if you have any. Once it is in, tell him it's in, and help him to jiggle the shape against the sides of the hole so that he can feel, as well as see, what 'in' means. Withdraw your help gradually as your child gets the idea.

Some children feel they have finished the task if the circle goes just part of the way in. Prompt him, verbally if possible, to keep trying. Respond enthusiastically when it goes all the way in — he must sense the difference in your response to a complete and incomplete attempt.

Playtime and Round-the-house Activities

Let your child put the plug in at bath-time. Some cookie trays and egg poachers have round holes, and you can use lids or plugs or drink coasters. A set of coasters and a box with holes in the lid makes a good toy — encourage your child to slide rather than to post them in.

Remembering and Extending

When your child has mastered this skill, you can move on to the puzzle-solving skills in Sequence H, beginning with FM.H.56, as well as continuing with the putting skills in this sequence.

BUILDS A TOWER OF TWO CUBES

FM.D.45

Here is another new kind of putting — and one which is basic to preschool play. Putting one block on top of another requires fine control of hand and eye. The child must aim correctly, balance the block and release it without toppling the tower.

How to Assess

Materials: Four small cubes — about 3 cm. Avoid plastic as it can be slippery.

Method: Demonstrate with two of the cubes. Put the third cube on the table, and give your child the fourth, directing him to 'put', imitating your tower. Do not hold the bottom cube.

Score *plus* if your child puts the block on. He should do this in at least two out of three tries.

How to Teach

You will need 3 cm cubes and a range of larger blocks.

Find the smallest block onto which your child can now put the 3 cm cube, and begin working with one that's just a little smaller. Keep reducing the size of the base block until he is putting the cube onto one the same size.

By decreasing the size of your base block in this way, you will help your child to aim correctly. This skill also depends on a correct release, and there are two quite different problems which can occur here.

1. *Releasing the cube too soon.* Dropping the block on will not work with cubes the same size. If your child does this while you are working with the large base blocks, go straight to the same-size cube, so that he can see for himself that the technique will not work. You may need to physically prompt him to hold on until the blocks touch, but do not encourage him to slam the cube down, or you will end up with the opposite problem!

2. *Forcing the cube down.* This may not cause a topple with a two-block tower, but it certainly will when he builds his towers higher. The touch of your finger under his wrist as he brings he hand down, combined with the word 'gently', will discourage him from being too vigorous. Omit the physical prompt as he gets the idea.

Playtime and Round-the-house Activities

The more practice the better with this skill! All kinds of things can be stacked — it doesn't matter at all if they are larger than the materials you are using in teaching sessions. You can use foam packing pieces, inverted nesting cups, play blocks of all kinds (including cloth ones), carpentry off-cuts, all sorts of food containers and so on.

Remembering and Extending

This skill is extended in FM.D.62.

BUILDS A TOWER OF SIX CUBES

FM.D.62

Keep in mind that in normal development over six months elapses between building a two-block tower and building a six-block tower. The steps below will show you how to develop your child's building skills gradually.

How to Assess

Materials: Six 3 cm cubes.

Method: Put one block on the table and hand your child a second block. Say 'Put block on block'. Continue until he has built a six-cube tower. Do not hold the base of the tower.

Score *plus* if your child builds a tower of six cubes, without physical assistance, in two out of three trials.

How to Teach

The steps for teaching are obvious!

1. *Builds a tower of three cubes.*
2. *Builds a tower of four cubes.*
3. *Builds a tower of five cubes.*
4. *Builds a tower of six cubes.*

If your child wants to knock the tower down before it is finished (a natural impulse!) put all the blocks you want him to use where he can see them and tell him 'All the blocks on'. Then say 'You've finished!' and let him topple the tower if he wants to.

If your child is tipping his tower over by pushing the blocks down too hard, use the method described for FM.D.45.

Never hold the base of the tower steady for him. It will only give him a false sense of what building is about. If he gets frustrated when his tower collapses, build it again for him up to the point where the accident happened, demonstrating as you go the technique for successful building.

Playtime and Round-the-house Activities

As for FM.D.45, aiming for higher structures.

Remembering and Extending

This skill is extended in FM.D.96. Perhaps you and your child would like to rest on your laurels for a little while, and enjoy playing with blocks in a less structured way.

BUILDS A TOWER OF EIGHT CUBES

FM.D.96

Assess and teach for FM.D.62, building up to eight cubes.

PUTS SIX SMALL PEGS IN A PEGBOARD

FM.D.97

This skill requires very precise aim and the ability to control small objects held between finger and thumb.

How to Assess

Materials: A pegboard with holes about 2 mm in diameter, with small pegs to match.

Method: Demonstrate putting a peg in a hole. Give some pegs to your child and ask him to put them in.

Score *plus* if your child places six small pegs in the holes.

How to Teach

Teach by gradually increasing the difficulty of the materials you give your child, from FM.D.43 on.

Playtime and Round-the-house Activities

At your toy library, preschool or toy shop, look for pegs which have holes in the tops and sides, allowing the child to build towers and other structures; beads that snap together to make bracelets and necklaces; mosaic pegboards and so on.

REMEMBERING AND EXTENDING THIS SEQUENCE

You will find many ways to help your child to remember and extend his precise putting skills. The kitchen is an excellent place for practice. You could make small holes in the tops of unbaked biscuits and ask your child to put a sultana in each one. Let him add a 'pinch' when the recipe calls for one. Sprinkling, using finger and thumb, is a good exercise too.

Perhaps your child would enjoy planting seeds in the garden or putting together nuts and bolts from the tool box. There are endless applications for this skill, and as long as you are aware that your child needs new challenges, you are sure to find them.

CHAPTER 5

FM.E: Manipulative Skills

As the child develops, he learns to manipulate objects in an ever-growing number of ways. There is a sense in which most of the skills in the Grasping, Putting, Drawing and Problem Solving and Puzzles Sequences could be called manipulative skills. So too could many of the skills in the Personal and Social Sequences; eating, washing, grooming and dressing involve some degree of manipulation or manual dexterity.

The skills we have selected for this sequence are all Fine Motor skills which involve using objects in a certain way to achieve a desired effect. They are all skills used in play, and contribute to the child's ability to make things or to make things happen. When taught alongside skills from other sequences, these skills all serve to broaden and extend the child's use of the objects around him.

Below we list all the skills in this sequence.

9 to 12 months

33. Pulls a string horizontally to attain a toy.
34. Pushes a toy train or car.
35. Bangs two cubes together.

12 to 15 months

50. Pulls a string vertically to attain a toy.

15 to 18 months

58. Manipulates an object using both hands.

18 months to 2 years

70. Folds paper imitatively.
71. Solves simple problems using tools.

2 to 3 years

91. Threads four large beads.
92. Threads four medium beads.
93. Snips with scissors.
94. Unscrews threaded toys.
95. Builds a six-block Duplo tower.

3 to 4 years

127. Threads four small beads.
128. Cuts across a 2 cm strip.
129. Cuts a 10 cm square in two.
130. Pastes a shape on the appropriate side; places on paper.
131. Builds a simple Duplo shape, minimum six blocks.

PULLS A STRING HORIZONTALLY TO ATTAIN A TOY

FM.E.33

This skill is allied closely with the early problem-solving skills described in Sequence FM.G. The child must use the string to bring the toy he wants within reach.

How to Assess

Materials: A favourite toy attached to a 60 cm string. You can use a pull-along toy.

Method: Demonstrate pulling the toy by the string. Place it out of reach of your child, with the string close at hand. Say 'Get the . . . '.

Score *plus* if your child pulls the string and attains the toy.

How to Teach

Use plenty of demonstrations, and physical help if necessary in the early stages.

Try putting the toy at the top of a sloping board, so that a little pull on the string will cause it to roll towards your child.

If your child has trouble manipulating the string, try putting the toy on the far corner of a nappy. Pulling the nappy will bring the toy closer. When your child masters this, try a string with a large bead on the pulling end.

If your child is crawling and heads towards the toy without pulling the string, put the toy inside the playpen, with the string coming through the bars, or play the game sitting at a large table.

Playtime and Round-the-house Activities

All sorts of things can be tied to strings, so you can put your child down to play surrounded by different challenges! Try this activity while he is playing on his tummy.

Remembering and Extending

You will work on a more challenging variation of this activity when you reach FM.E.50 (pulls a string vertically to attain a toy).

PUSHES A TOY TRAIN OR CAR

FM.E.34

Discovering the intended purposes of toys and everyday objects is a crucial part of early learning. Pushing a toy car is a good place to start, because it is a useful play skill and it involves a new Fine Motor action. It requires the child to exert downward and horizontal pressure at the same time.

How to Assess

Materials: A toy car or train with a straightforward wheel action (not the pull-back kind).
Method: Demonstrate the action to the child and wait for him to copy you, or observe him as he plays with the car.

Score *plus* if your child pushes the toy several times in a purposeful way.

How to Teach

Use demonstrations, as much physical help as is needed and lots of 'brmm-brmm's'.

We have had success with cars that offer a slight resistance when pushed (the kind that can be revved up by a series of forward pushes). Feeling the vibration through their hands can help children to get the idea. Cars which make a noise when moving can also be very satisfying. But if these cars are not the in thing at the moment they will be hard to find in the shops, so persevere with what you have.

Playtime and Round-the-house Activities

This is another activity in which brothers and sisters can readily take part.

Try sitting your child at the higher end of a piece of masonite set on a slight slope, so that when he lets his car go it will roll down.

Push the car up and down your legs, then his, so that he experiences the effect in a different way.

Remembering and Extending

Once your child can push a car, include cars, trucks and trains of all sorts among his toys.

Introduce him to other objects which are used for specific purposes or to create certain effects. These could include a hairbrush, a spoon, a cup, a toy plastic knife, a hat, a whistle, a push-down spinning top. (Refer to PS.A.22.)

BANGS TWO CUBES TOGETHER

FM.E.35

When he experiments with banging things together, your child is beginning to explore the effect that one object can have on another. This skill combines well with action imitation in language work.

How to Assess

Materials: Two small cubes that can be easily held in the hand. Two more, for you.
Method: Give two cubes to your child and demonstrate with your cubes.

Score *plus* if your child bangs his cubes together several times in a purposeful way.

How to Teach

You can use any objects that can be banged together. Hollow plastic blocks that make a satisfying noise when banged together are helpful.

If your child does not try to copy you, work on imitation of some easier actions, such as banging blocks or hands on the table. Refer to Book 3, Chapter 2, for suggestions on promoting imitation.

If your child tries to copy you, but cannot bring the blocks together, try using larger objects to begin with. Help your child to bring his hands together by prompting gently from just below his elbows.

Playtime and Round-the-house Activities

Try combining your banging with a song, such as:

My blocks are banging, banging, banging.
My blocks are banging, just like this.

Any tune will do! This is an excellent skill for a brother or sister to teach.

Remembering and Extending

When your child can bang blocks together, introduce activities such as banging a drum or xylophone. This is a good time to introduce him to your saucepan cupboard. A few pots and lids and a wooden spoon will result in lots of noisy fun!

PULLS A STRING VERTICALLY TO ATTAIN A TOY

FM.E.50

In the first item in this sequence (FM.E.33), the child learned to attain a toy by pulling a string horizontally. Pulling a string vertically to attain a toy requires a higher degree of manipulative skill, because the child will be back to square one after any pause. He must release each hand in turn to grasp the string at a lower point in order to keep the object moving upward.

How to Assess

Materials: An interesting object tied to the end of a 60 cm string.

Method: Tie one end of the string to the toy and the other end to the edge of your child's highchair table, so that it hangs down. Demonstrate pulling the string to get the toy. Give the string to your child and encourage him to pull the string up. The string should be long enough that a single upward movement does not lift the toy onto the table.

Score *plus* if your child pulls the string and the toys without assistance.

How to Teach

Teach by physically guiding your child to release and take the string as necessary, gradually reducing your assistance.

Playtime and Round-the-house Activities

If your child is standing, he may enjoy playing this game while standing at the wall of his playpen, with the toys hanging down outside. Or stand him at the coffee table, with the toy hanging down the opposite side, and encourage him to pull the toy up and then across the table.

Remembering and Extending

A challenging variation is to have your child pull a soft toy up and out of a long cardboard cylinder. Here he will have to hold the cylinder steady with one hand, so this leads on naturally to the two-handed skills described in FM.E.58. In FM.E.71 your child will be using sticks, rather than strings, to retrieve toys.

MANIPULATES AN OBJECT USING BOTH HANDS

FM.E.58

In the first year, children tend to manipulate objects with either one hand or the other. When they find an object that interests them, they will take it in one hand and shake it or bang it on the floor. When an object is held in both hands, the two hands are used as one, each contributing to the same action. Learning to use two hands to manipulate an object, with each hand serving a different purpose, is a big step forward.

How to Assess

Materials: Any toy that requires both hands for manipulation.

Examples are a pinwheel, a container with a lid, a tambourine, a doll with movable limbs.

Method: Give the toy to the child and observe him at play.

Score *plus* if your child manipulates the object with both hands, using each hand for a different purpose. For example, he could hold the pinwheel with one hand and make it spin with the other, or steady the container with one hand while removing the lid.

How to Teach

Have a new look at your child's toy collection to ensure that he has access to toys which can be manipulated with both hands.

Play with these toys with your child, demonstrating often, giving verbal directions and helping him physically when necessary. You may find it easier to guide his hands through the correct movements if you sit behind him, so that your right hand is aligned with his.

Playtime and Round-the-house Activities

In the kitchen, let your child play with the rotary egg-beater, or remove lids from containers. In the bathroom, encourage him to hold his washcloth with one hand while he rubs soap on with the other.

Give your child loosely wrapped parcels to unwrap. Use a variety of papers, such as cellophone, crepe paper, aluminium foil and waxed paper. This game is great fun, even when the 'surprises' inside are just his old familiar toys!

Remembering and Extending

Once your child is using his hands to co-operate with each other in this way, he will find the skill too useful to forget!

FOLDS PAPER IMITATIVELY

FM.E.70

In this activity, the child must use both hands together in a complex series of actions, in order to achieve the desired result.

How to Assess

Materials: Pieces of paper about 15 cm by 25 cm.
Method: Take a piece of paper and say 'I'm going to fold the paper'. Demonstrate, saying 'Over and rub'. Hand a piece of paper to your child and say 'You fold the paper'. Give three tries.

Score *plus* if your child folds the paper over and makes a crease of 8 cm or more without physical or verbal help in two out of three tries.

How to Teach

This skill involves a sequence of actions. Fold some sheets of paper yourself, paying close attention to the various actions involved. Then help your child to perform the actions, saying 'Over and rub'. Give a demonstration each time.

Repetition is the key to teaching this skill, so that the child learns the rhythm of the exercise.

Gradually reduce first your physical help and then your verbal help, until your child can fold paper with only a demonstration to help him.

Collect old wrapping paper to make teaching sessions more interesting. Many children also enjoy playing an 'open and shut' game with the folded pieces of paper.

Playtime and Round-the-house Activities

This skill has several applications in art activities. Place thick paint (of several colours) in the centre of a piece of paper, fold it over and open it up to see the beautiful butterfly. Or let your child paint with runny paint, and fold and rub to make an interesting pattern. Your child can transform his folded paper into cards for special occasions.

Remembering and Extending

You can extend the imitation component of this activity by folding, and then folding the same piece of paper again.

Once the idea of folding is firmly established you will be able to omit your demonstrations.

SOLVES SIMPLE PROBLEMS USING TOOLS

FM.E.71

When a child pulls a string to attain a toy (FM.E.38, 50) he is using the string as a tool. Here, the child's ability to use tools to meet his ends is extended. You can teach your child some basic strategies, such as using a stick to bring an object within reach, by setting up problems for him to solve. It is equally important to make full use of real problems that occur from day to day, by helping your child to find solutions and carry them through himself, rather than stepping in to solve his problems for him.

From all this talk about solving problems, you can see that this item could also have been placed in Sequence FM.H: Problem Solving and Puzzles. We include it here because using tools involves considerable manual dexterity, and without this dexterity, problem-solving ability will be of little practical use to him.

How to Assess

Materials: A hollow container or tube, 3 to 6 cm in diameter, open at both ends. A stick. A small soft toy.
Method: Stuff the toy into the container and give it to your child, with the stick. Point out the toy to your child, and ask him to get it out, but do not demonstrate or give further directions.

Score *plus* if your child uses the stick to push the toy out of the container.

How to Teach

Teach by demonstration and giving verbal directions. Give no more physical help than is absolutely necessary.

Start with a toy that fits loosely in the container, and progress to toys that fit more tightly. Short tubes, such as empty toilet rolls, will be easier to begin with than long ones.

If your child shows little interest in pushing out the toy, a clear tube that leaves the toy visible can be very helpful. You could make such a tube from stiff cellophane.

Playtime and Round-the-house Activities

What can you do when Teddy falls under the bed, or the plug gets stuck in the bath, or the door keeps banging, or the ball gets stuck in the tree? Discuss such situations with your child, as they occur. Give him the opportunity to find solutions before you step in. If your help or advice is needed, let your child participate actively in finding a suitable tool and in carrying out the solution.

Remembering and Extending

Encouraging your child to use tools to solve his problems should be an ongoing process. Often it will be so much easier and quicker to provide the solution yourself, but do refer the problem to him when time allows.

You are sure to find that your child learns to use tools to get into all sorts of mischief! The child who pulls a chair across the room to climb up to a forbidden shelf is using a tool to solve his problem. While such events are unlikely to meet with your unconditional delight, it is good to know that your child is using his skill in inventive ways!

THREADS FOUR LARGE BEADS

FM.E.91

Bead threading requires steadiness in both hands at once, precise aim and, most important of all, the ability to work through a sequence of actions.

To thread the bead you must hold bead and string correctly, put the string in the hole, push it along, readjust your grip and then pull the bead to the end of the string.

Toy shops do sell suitable beads, but we have found that the best way to collect a range of beads is to visit a craft shop.

How to Assess

Materials: At least five large beads, about 3 cm across, with large holes of about 1 cm across. A long pipecleaner or plastic-coated wire with a small bead attached to the end. Your 'string' should not droop when held about 8 cm from the threading end.

Method: Demonstrate with the first bead, then put the remaining beads and the string on the table. Direct him to 'Put the beads on the string'. You can repeat this direction for each bead.

Score *plus* if your child threads four beads and pushes them along the string without physical or verbal assistance.

How to Teach

To learn this skill your child needs a strategy that he can follow every time. Take care to work out a suitable strategy before you start teaching. Think about which hand should hold the bead, and which hand should hold the string. How far down the string should he grasp it? Thread several beads yourself, noting every movement that is necessary. Your strategy will look something like this (though it need not be exactly the same).

1. *Grasp the string in the right hand, about 8 cm from the end.*
2. *Grasp the bead in the left hand.*
3. *Push the string through the hole (or put the bead onto the string).*
4. *With the left hand, release the bead and grasp the end of string.*
5. *With the right hand, release the string and grasp the bead.*
6. *Push the bead to end of the string.*
7. *Grasp the string with the right hand about 8 cm from the end and release the left hand, ready to start the next bead.*

Complicated, isn't it? But if you guide your child through it using exactly the same steps and also exactly the same verbal reminders each time, he will learn the strategy. As you sense that he is mastering a particular step, withdraw your assistance at that point. Give him a chance to anticipate what comes next.

When he has threaded his beads he has made something — a necklace or a bracelet. Let him be proud of it!

Playtime and Round-the-house Activities

All sorts of things can be threaded. Seek out large things now and keep the smaller ones in mind for later. Perhaps you have some large nuts in the tool box. You could try slicing up a piece of old hose into short sections. Or, if you are feeling creative, lovely beads with fascinating shapes can be made out of dough or modelling compound and hardened in the oven.

Remembering and Extending

You will work on threading smaller beads in FM.E.92.

THREADS FOUR MEDIUM BEADS

FM.E.92

Assess and teach as for FM.E.91, using beads about 2 cm across with holes about 0.5 cm in diameter.

Play materials at this level can include dry tubular pasta, cotton reels, milk bottle lids with holes punched in them and shapes cut out of thick cardboard. Using such materials lets your child make something to keep or give as a present.

SNIPS WITH SCISSORS

FM.E.93

Cutting with scissors is a popular activity in most preschools, and provides hours of fun at home too. It provides excellent practice in two-handed eye–hand co-ordination.

The ability to snip with scissors normally appears at about the 2½-year-old level. Before you consider teaching this skill, check that your child's hands are large enough and strong enough to handle kindergarten scissors. In our work with children with Down's Syndrome we have found that many make better progress with cutting when its introduction is delayed, even though they have done well with other skills at this level. If you cannot easily guide your child's hands to open and close the scissors, you may prefer to go on with other skills in this sequence and return to cutting later.

Materials are extremely important in teaching cutting. Look for scissors with a free action and a comfortable finger grip. Wide plastic handles are usually more comfortable than narrow metal ones. The points must, of course, be blunt but the cutting edge should be fairly sharp. There is nothing more frustrating for child or teacher than scissors which do not work!

Scissors with a spring action, which do not need to be manually opened, can be a solution for children who are prevented by physical handicap from using ordinary scissors. But be cautious about introducing these scissors as cutting, though difficult, does provide excellent exercise for the hand.

If your child's hands are not strong enough to operate the scissors, special hand exercises are called for. Squeezing a small rubber ball is a good starting point, and your physiotherapist will advise you further.

Paper used in early cutting work should be stiff enough to stay steady when held with one hand, but not so stiff as to resist cutting.

How to Assess

Materials: A pair of kindergarten scissors, as described above. A 10 cm square of paper.

Method: Say 'Look, I can cut the paper'. Snip the edge of the paper with the scissors. Give the scissors to the child's preferred hand, and the paper to his other hand. Say 'You cut the paper'. Let your child have five tries — you may demonstrate each time.

Score *plus* if your child makes a snip of 1 cm or more in at least three out of five tries.

How to Teach

This skill can be taught in three steps. Assess your child first on each step, to see where teaching should begin.

1. *Opens and closes the scissors.* To achieve this step, the child must be able to open and close the scissors, but need not position the scissors or hold the paper himself. Teach your child by helping him physically, while saying 'Open . . . shut'. Physical help involves showing your child where to position his fingers and assisting the action. Your hands should touch your child's hands, so that it is his hands and not yours which cause the scissors to open. If you open the scissors for him by pulling the handles apart, the scissors will pull your child's fingers apart, giving him a false impression of what he is aiming for. Cutting is one of the hardest actions to physically assist. You will find it easier if you stand behind your child, so that your hand and your child's hand are in the same position. Although paper is not essential to this step, it does add purpose to the activity. You hold the paper and slip it between the blades of the scissors once your child has opened them. Your child then has the satisfaction of seeing the cut paper. Continue working on this step until your child can open and close the scissors. You can continue to teach the correct finger positions as you teach the next step.
2. *Snips paper (paper held by the teacher).* Now your child must open the scissors, move them into the correct position for cutting and snip the paper. Guide your child's hand towards the paper by the lightest possible touch to the wrist. Gradually reduce your guidance as your child masters the skill.
3. *Snips with scissors, holding the paper.* Your child can now learn to snip paper as described in the notes on assessment above. Continue to give light physical assistance for as long as it is needed, making sure that your hands touch your child's hands and not the scissors or the paper, and gradually reducing your help.

Playtime and Round-the-house Activities

Cutting is not, of course, a suitable activity for independent play with young children, but it will help your child's sense of what cutting is for it you link it to craft-work such as collage pasting.

For variety, use wallpaper samples, magazine covers (the inside pages may be a bit floppy at this early stage), old greeting cards, drinking straws (fun to snip into pieces) and pieces of greenery from the garden.

Remembering and Extending

This skill is directly extended in FM.E.128 (cuts across a 2 cm strip).

UNSCREWS THREADED TOYS

FM.E.94

Here is another activity requiring two-handed co-ordination.

How to Assess

Materials: A screwing toy with threaded pieces at least 6 cm in diameter at the head requiring four turns to remove. These can be obtained separately through toy shops or as part of a carpentry set or construction set.

Method: Demonstrate unscrewing the toy. Screw it back in, making four turns, and hand it to your child. Say 'You unscrew now'.

Score *plus* if your child removes the threaded piece, holding the main body of the toy steady with one hand.

How to Teach

Look for large plastic nuts and bolts that are easy to operate.

Teach through demonstration, giving verbal and physical help where necessary. You may find it easier to help your child from behind.

Playtime and Round-the-house Activities

Look for screw-top jars and bottles that are slim enough for your child to hold in one hand. Old shampoo bottles may prove useful. If you teach this skill in the bath, your child can have the satisfaction of emptying out the contents of the bottle once the lid is off.

Remembering and Extending

Once your child has mastered unscrewing, you can teach him to screw things together too.

BUILDS A SIX-BLOCK DUPLO TOWER

FM.E.95

As well as being a good manipulation exercise, this activity opens up an exciting new avenue of play to your child.

'Duplo' is another name for large-scale Lego. You can, of course, choose another brand; look for interlocking blocks with a minimum size of 3 cm square.

How to Assess

Materials: At least six oblong Duplo blocks (about 3 cm by 6 cm).

Method: Demonstrate building a tower, without giving verbal information about how you are doing it. Separate the blocks, give them to your child and ask him to build a tower.

Score *plus* if your child builds a tower of six blocks, with the blocks fitting closely together.

How to Teach

Begin by using square blocks. These are easier to align and require less downward pressure.

Base plates are available which give added stability to towers and other structures.

Direct your child to 'Press the block DOWN'. If physical help is required, guide your child's hands — do not touch the blocks yourself. If your child needs help to position the block, guide him gently from his wrist, then his forearm and then his elbow. Aim to phase out all physical help.

When your child can build with square blocks, progess to oblong ones.

You can take turns to add blocks as you teach so that the final structure is higher.

Playtime and Round-the-house Activities

If you have access to a toy library, look for other construction toys which fit together in a straightforward way. Construction toys for 2-year-olds are not easy to find, but more and more are coming onto the market with the increasing awareness of the importance of early childhood learning.

Other activities which require both accurate aim and strength include putting spring clothes pegs onto a line and pressing snap-on lids onto containers.

Remembering and Extending

This skill is extended in FM.E.131 (builds a simple Duplo shape).

THREADS FOUR SMALL BEADS

FM.E.127

Assess and teach as for FM.E.91, using beads about 1 cm square across with holes about 2 mm in diameter.

Your child can now thread just about anything with a hole in it! If your child goes to preschool, the craft table there will provide plenty of ideas.

CUTS ACROSS A 2 CM STRIP

FM.E.128

This is the first step in learning to open and close the scissors repeatedly to cut across a piece of paper. The hardest part is leaving the scissors in position while the scissors are reopened.

With a 2 cm strip, your child should need to reopen only once; that is, it should take only two cuts to divide the paper.

How to Assess

Materials: Kindergarten scissors and strips of paper 2 cm wide.

Method: Demonstrate cutting and then give the scissors to your child's preferred hand and a strip of paper to the other hand. Say 'You cut across the paper'. Give three tries, demonstrating each time if necessary.

Score *plus* if your child cuts right across the strip in two out of three tries.

How to Teach

Initially you will need to step in after your child has closed his scissors the first time and hold his hand in position, directing him to open the scissors again.

Your child will find this easier if you hold the strip of paper at one end, keeping it taut and steady. You can set this as an in-between objective (cuts across strip when helped to hold paper), removing your help when your child has mastered reopening and closing his scissors.

Continue teaching until your child can cut across the strip without help.

Playtime and Round-the-house Activities

As for FM.E.93, using strips of paper.

Remembering and Extending

You can move directly on to FM.E.129.

CUTS A 10 CM SQUARE IN TWO

FM.E.129

This is a direct continuation of FM.E.128, and teaches a child to open and close the scissors repeatedly to cut across a piece of paper.

How to Assess

Materials: Kindergarten scissors and several 10 cm squares of paper.

Method: As for FM.E.128 using 10 cm squares. Give three tries.

Score *plus* if your child cuts right across the square in at least two out of three tries.

How to Teach

Continuing on from FM.E.128 and following the same method, work through the following steps.

1. *Cuts across a 3 cm strip.*
2. *Cuts across a 4 cm strip.*
3. *Cuts across a 6 cm strip.*
4. *Cuts across a 8 cm square.*
5. *Cuts across a 10 cm square.*

Use more, or fewer, steps, according to your child's progress.

Playtime and Round-the-house Activities

As for earlier cutting activities, except that now you will have greater scope for varying methods. Your child may enjoy cutting magazine pictures in two and then putting the pieces back together again — like a puzzle.

Remembering and Extending

If your child enjoys cutting, you might like to try the following extension skills, which are taken from the 4–5-year-old skills in the Macquarie Program:

- Cuts along a 20 cm line.
- Cuts out a 10 cm square, turning the paper at the corners.
- Cuts out a semicircle (5 cm diameter) drawn on the edge of the paper.
- Cuts out a 5 cm circle, turning the paper.

PASTES A SHAPE ON THE APPROPRIATE SIDE; PLACES ON PAPER

FM.E.130

Pasting is another activity which is important at preschool and school, and it's fun at home too. As well as manipulating the materials, the child is required to recognise the right and wrong sides of a picture and place his paste accordingly.

How to Assess

Materials: A simple shape, such as a cut-out face. *Method:* Give the child the shape, paste and paper. Say 'Paste the face on'. Do not demonstrate.

Score *plus* if your child turns the shape over and paints paste on the wrong side, then turns again and pastes the shape, right side up, on the paper.

How to Teach

Start by using scraps of coloured paper which have no right side. Use demonstration and verbal directions to teach your child the steps.

1. *Takes the brush.*
2. *Dips the brush.*
3. *Wipes off excess paste on the rim of the paste jar.*
4. *Paints the paste on a shape.*
5. *Turns the shape paste-side down.*
6. *Position the shape on the paper.*

When your child can do this without extra help, introduce pictures which do have a right side. Ask 'Which is the right side?' and give your child the opportunity to identify it by himself. Then ask 'Where do we put the paste?' Tell him, if necessary: 'Paste goes on the wrong side' or 'on the back'.

Now direct your child to 'Paste the shape on'. If necessary, give the reminder 'right side up'.

Continue giving regular practice until your child can paste shapes correctly without verbal directions or demonstrations.

Playtime and Round-the-house Activities

Your child is sure to enjoy a sticker book as an occasional treat; these make identification of the right and wrong sides quite easy. Fridge magnets also have right and wrong sides.

Help your child to make cards, wrapping paper and Christmas decorations with paste and paper. Display his efforts prominently and let him be proud of them. Don't forget to write his name on them as he watches!

Remembering and Extending

More advanced pasting activities include the following:

- Pasting shapes inside predrawn shapes on paper. Start with circles, then circles of different sizes, then squares and so on.
- Pasting two or more precut pieces together to make a shape or picture. Start with two halves of a square or circle and progress gradually to more complex pictures, such as a sailing boat, a house, a truck.
- Pasting face parts on a cardboard circle or paper plate to make a face. Add some wool scraps or cottonwool hair and a bright bow tie, and hang the face up in your child's bedroom.

BUILDS A SIMPLE DUPLO SHAPE, MINIMUM SIX BLOCKS

FM.E.131

This activity extends the skill learned in FM.E.95. The child is now encouraged to use his Duplo blocks (or other construction materials) to make a more complex structure, such as a house or a figure.

How to Assess

Materials: A range of Duplo blocks, or the equivalent.

Method: Ask your child to build something with the blocks.

Score *plus* if your child uses at least six blocks and builds a simple shape such as a house, or a car, or a man. Do not score *plus* if your child builds a tower.

How to Teach

Teach by playing with the materials with your child, demonstrating possibilities and making suggestions. Your child should not feel he has failed if he builds a tower. Praise the tower and then show him how he could do something more with it. Perhaps you could build a tower and then join the two together with a long piece to make a bridge.

Playtime and Round-the-house Activities

Keep looking for new construction materials (preferably from a toy library) that will offer your child a challenge without frustrating him. Give him opportunities to watch other children using construction toys.

Remembering and Extending

Once your child can make simple shapes with Duplo, give him the opportunity to experiment with Lego or another small-scale construction toy. At this stage, avoid kits which are designed to be put together in a specified way; the basic kits which provide a variety of multi-purpose shapes are best to start with.

REMEMBERING AND EXTENDING THIS SEQUENCE

Some manipulative skills which can be taught once this sequence has been completed are:

- Threading a lacing card
- Sewing with a large needle, thick thread and open-weave fabric
- Sharpening a pencil (using an enclosed pencil sharpener)
- Opening and closing catches, such as those on a child's school case
- Sticking with sticky tape
- Using a small stapler
- Operating a simple cassette player
- Hammering large nails into soft wood, or golf tees into foam packaging pieces
- Winding up clockwork toys.

CHAPTER 6

FM.F: Drawing

Drawing is an important activity in its own right, and it provides the basis for writing skills later on.

Early in this sequence, your child will learn to scribble. Then the sequence moves on to the imitation of more controlled lines and shapes. While you are teaching these more advanced skills, opportunities should continue for free scribble and the child should be encouraged to feel proud of the seemingly random patterns he makes. If he includes more controlled strokes in his free expression, so much the better, but when he is playing with crayons and exploring the possibilities, don't restrict him to lines and circles! As in all skill areas, his drawing should be developed through both structured work and play.

A note about choice of hand. Initially, most children are ambidextrous and will scribble with either hand. Later, they develop a preference for one hand for most reaching, grasping and putting activities, and use this hand more for drawing activities. Sometimes this hand preference seems to change from week to week, but in time it will settle down. If you are in doubt, offer the crayon midway between your child's hands and let him make the choice.

In the early stages of this sequence, use short, thick crayons with bright, clear colours for teaching. At playtime you can introduce all sorts of materials. Paints and brushes, coloured pencils and Textas, finger paint — even shaving foam — all can provide hours of practice and fun. A bucket of water and a paintbrush on a sunny concrete path create a fascinating effect. Corrugated cardboard, sandpaper and glass make interesting surfaces on which to experiment. But do teach new skills with those short, thick crayons — they are specially designed for young fingers to grasp.

Below we list all the skills in this sequence.

9 to 12 months

40. Attempts to imitate scribble.

12 to 15 months

46. Holds a crayon.
47. Marks paper with a crayon.

15 to 18 months

53. Scribbles spontaneously.

18 months to 2 years

63. Imitates a vertical line.

2 to 3 years

85. Imitates circular scribble.
86. Imitates horizontal lines.
87. Holds a crayon with the fingers.
88. Makes controlled marks on paper.
89. Imitates a circle.
90. Copies a circle.

3 to 4 years

119. Imitates a plus sign.
120. Imitates a V shape.
121. Copies a plus sign.
122. Draws simple pictures.
123. Colours in areas using templates.
124. Paints shapes on large paper.
125. Adds an arm or a leg to an incomplete man.
126. Draws a person with at least three parts.

ATTEMPTS TO IMITATE SCRIBBLE

FM.F.40

Children generally demonstrate an awareness that crayons and paper go together, and an interest in the marks created by others, before they are able to make marks themselves. So it makes sense to give your child opportunities to watch you drawing, well before he is ready to start drawing himself.

Here we see whether the child shows an awareness and interest by attempting to draw on paper.

How to Assess

Materials: Paper and a thick crayon.

Method: Demonstrate drawing on the paper and give the crayon to your child.

Score *plus* if your child attempts to scribble.

If your child does not attempt to imitate scribble, you can teach this in conjuction with the next two items in this sequence.

HOLDS A CRAYON

FM.F.46

Here we are concerned with an adaptive hold — that is, a hold with one end of the crayon up, and one end down, ready to draw. If your child attempted to imitate scribble in FM.F.40, but did not mark the paper, it was probably because he was not holding the crayon at the correct angle to the paper.

You can assess and teach this skill at the same time as FM.F.47 (marks paper with a crayon).

How to Assess

Materials: Paper and a thick crayon.
Method: Demonstrate drawing, then hand the crayon to your child.

Score *plus* if your child holds the crayon with one end up and the other end down, in a position which allows him to draw.

How to Teach

Teach at the same time as FM.F.47.

When your child picks up a crayon, tilt his hand from the wrist as you help him to mark the paper. Make your support lighter and lighter as he gets the idea.

Note that some children hold their crayons with their little fingers closest to the paper, while some prefer to have their thumbs closest. Use whichever method seems most comfortable for your child.

If he is just learning to scribble, your child will probably use all his fingers to clasp the crayon against his palm. This is quite acceptable. It may be a year or more before he masters holding his crayon away from his palm with his fingers.

MARKS PAPER WITH A CRAYON

FM.F.47

When the child can hold the crayon in an up-and-down position, he will discover that he, too, can make marks on the paper. To begin with, these marks may be dots or dashes, rather than extended scribble marks.

Assess and teach this skill at the same times as FM.F.46 (holds a crayon).

How to Assess

As for FM.F.46, scoring *plus* if your child makes a mark on the paper with the crayon.

How to Teach

As well as guiding your child to hold the crayon upright, encourage him to mark the paper. Give plenty of demonstrations and verbal encouragement.

Remembering and Extending

Go straight on to FM.F.53 (scribbles spontaneously).

SCRIBBLES SPONTANEOUSLY

FM.F.53

From those first marks on paper, frequently achieved by banging with the crayon, the child progresses to making extended scribble. He also develops a firm concept of what the crayon and paper are for, so that he no longer needs a demonstration to get him going.

How to Assess

Materials: Paper and a thick crayon.
Method: Give the paper and crayon to your child. Do not demonstrate.

Score *plus* if your child scribbles spontaneously. His scribbling should include some lines. Do not score *plus* if he only makes dots by banging the crayon.

How to Teach

Work through these three steps, and begin teaching at the step where your child first experiences difficulty.

1. *Scribbles when scribbling is demonstrated and he is given physical help.* Make bold lines and shapes when you demonstrate, and encourge your child to look closely. When you are helping him don't hold him by the hand unless it is necessary. Guide him from the wrist or upper arm instead. This will give him a little more independence.

2. *Scribbles following demonstration, with no physical help.* To make the transition from step 1 to step 2, make your touch on his wrist or arm gradually lighter and shorter. Once he can con-

tinue to scribble after a short, light touch to get him going, stop your physical help altogether.

3. *Scribbles spontaneously*, as in the main objective. To make the transition from step 2 to step 3, make your demonstrations shorter and shorter, then stop them altogether. Allow plenty of time, after you have given your child the crayon, for him to organise his thoughts and respond. Let him see that you expect him to do something with the crayon.

In all steps, let your child be proud of his drawing. If other children have their art work on display, put his up too.

Playtime and Round-the-house Activities

Drawing should be a playful activity, and even at this very early stage it is a good idea to use lots of different colours and different kinds of paper to scribble on.

Round-the-house, you can show your child different ways to scribble with his fingers — on a floury baking board, on a steamed-up mirror, in Daddy's shaving cream on the side of the bath, on a tray with a thin layer of sand. Outside, you can scribble with sticks in sand or dirt.

Remembering and Extending

As well as going on to the more controlled strokes taught later in this sequence, you can extend your child by giving him different materials to scribble with. Some suggestions were made in the general notes at the beginning of this sequence. You will find many more ideas at your local preschool or in resource books for parents of toddlers.

IMITATES A VERTICAL LINE

FM.F.63

This is the first of the controlled strokes taught in this sequence. It requires that the child thinks about where to start, what direction to go in and where to stop. Equally important is the ability to copy what someone else does.

How to Assess

Materials: Paper and a thick crayon.
Method: Place the paper in front of the child. Say 'I'm going to draw a line'. Demonstrate drawing a vertical line. Give the crayon to your child and say 'You draw a line'.

Score *plus* if your child makes one or more lines on the paper that are longer than 2 cm and varying no more than 30° from the vertical position.

How to Teach

Demonstrations should continue throughout the teaching of this skill. Work through the following steps to find the point where teaching should begin.

1. *Imitates a vertical line with verbal and physical help.* Draw your line, and then help your child to draw his, saying 'Down . . . and stop'.

2. *Imitates a vertical line with verbal help, and physical help with stopping only.* Frequently children get the idea of going down but do not lift their crayons from the paper when they get to the bottom. Instead, they continue their lines up again or drift off into scribble. If this is happening, exaggerate your own 'stop' when you demonstrate and step in when your child gets near the bottom to lift his hand up away from the paper. Say 'Down . . . and . . . STOP!' If your child has difficulty remembering where to start as well, try drawing a line of large dots across the top of the paper and teach him to start on a dot. Remember that all this extra help must be gradually reduced as your child gets the idea.

3. *Imitates a vertical line with verbal help only.* While no physical help is given, the verbal reminder 'down and stop' continues. From time to time, leave your reminder out, to see if your child can draw his lines without it.

4. *Imitates a vertical line, as in the main objective.* When your child has mastered step 3, your reminders should become less and less frequent, until you are giving just one at the beginning of your practice session, and then none at all. Now your child has mastered the skill.

Playtime and Round-the-house Activities

Corrugated cardboard is an excellent material for practising vertical lines, as the crayon will slip easily down the grooves for a perfect result. If your child is standing, practise on a chalkboard or on large sheets of paper pinned to an easel. The activities listed under FM.F.53 (scribbling) can also be used for practising lines. Remember that in play activities your child should have plenty of opportunities for scribbling as well.

Remembering and Extending

Even after you begin teaching FM.F.85 and 86, in which other kinds of strokes are imitated, practice with vertical lines should continue. Play imitation games with crayons and paper. You scribble, then direct your child to do the same. You draw a line, and then ask your child to draw one. To give your child the idea, start by copying what he does.

IMITATES CIRCULAR SCRIBBLE

FM.F.85

This skill is the very beginning of drawing circles. It can be lots of fun to do!

How to Assess

Materials: Thick crayons and paper.
Method: Say 'I'm going to draw round and round'. Demonstrate, going round and round several times in a large circle. Give the crayon to your child, saying 'Now you do it'. Give three tries.

Score *plus* if your child makes a large, rounded, continuous pattern on the paper in two out of the three tries.

How to Teach

Work through the following steps to determine your starting point.

1. *Makes circular movement with demonstration, verbal help and physical help.* To help your child verbally, say 'round and round' as you draw. To help him physically, use both or either of the following methods: (1) Guide him gently from wrist or upper arm in a circular movement, and/or (2) Cut out a large circle from a sheet of thick cardboard to make a template. Place it over your drawing paper, and show your child how to trace round and round inside the cut-out shape.

2. *Makes circular movement with demonstration and verbal help only.* Keep saying 'round and round' but reduce the amount of physical help you give him until he needs none at all.

3. *Makes circular movement with demonstration only, as in the main objective.* Just say 'round and round' the first time you do it in any session. Then stop saying it altogether.

Playtime and Round-the-house Activities

Going 'round and round' is great fun with finger paint, chalk, Textas — all kinds of drawing materials.

Help your child to trace with his finger all the round things you come across in the house — the rim of a bowl, the plug hole, the bottom of a bucket, the wheel of a bike and so on.

Remembering and Extending

This skill will be directly extended in FM.F.89, but going round and round can still continue for its own sake in creative drawing, and in imitation games where different lines and shapes are interspersed.

IMITATES HORIZONTAL LINES

FM.F.86

When he achieves this skill, your child will be able to distinguish between, and copy, both vertical lines and horizontal lines. Encourage him to draw from left to right — this is the direction he will later use for writing.

Assess and teach as for FM.F.63, but using the directions 'Across . . . and stop'.

Continue to give practice with vertical lines as well. When your child has mastered horizontal lines, he should be able to participate in an imitation game where circular scribble, horizontal lines and vertical lines are alternated.

HOLDS A CRAYON WITH THE FINGERS

FM.F.87

You will see from the D.S.I. that this skill occurs at much the same time as stringing medium beads. The child is now quite adept in his Fine Motor control and is ready to move on from the early, full-fist crayon grasp to the more efficient finger grasp. The crayon is grasped between the thumb and the fingers, which are grouped together and work as a single unit. This is not the same as the mature pencil grip that we use, but it is a step in that direction.

How to Assess

Materials: Thick crayons and paper.
Method: Observe your child while he is drawing.

Score *plus* if your child holds the crayon using his thumb and grouped fingers, rather than in the palm of his hand.

How to Teach

Teach at the same time as your next drawing objective. When your child holds the crayon in a full-fist grasp against the palm of his hand, retrieve the crayon, say 'Hold it with your fingers' and help him to position it correctly.

Your child should not feel that he has made a mistake. Rather, he should feel that you are trying to help him achieve a better result.

Playtime and Round-the-house Activities

Have a look at the way in which your child holds other objects. Is he holding his spoon as efficiently as he could? Or his toothbrush? Or his paintbrushes? Don't expect the mature grasp of an adult, but if you see ways in which his grasp could be made just a little more efficient, help him to see those ways too.

Now that you know that your child can hold a crayon with his fingers, make a habit of checking his grasp every time you draw together, whether at work or in play.

MAKES CONTROLLED MARKS ON PAPER

FM.F.88

In this item, we check that the child is using the drawing skills learned so far in this sequence in his free drawing.

How to Assess

Materials: Thick crayons and paper.

Method: Give paper and crayons to your child, and ask him to draw a picture.

Score *plus* if your child makes at least three distinct patterns on the paper (scribble, circular lines, straight lines or other patterns). He must make at least three different marks in three different places on the paper to score.

How to Teach

Teach by spending time with your child as he draws freely, using demonstrations and verbal encouragement to show how he can cover different areas of the paper, and include different patterns in his drawing. Encourage him to use different colours too.

IMITATES A CIRCLE

FM.F.89

Mastering the skill of drawing a circle represents a big step forward in your child's control of his crayon. He must think ahead about where he is going and stop at a precise point. His movement must be smooth rather than jerky. Quite a challenge!

Note that he is required only to draw a circle in imitation at this stage.

How to Assess

Materials: Thick crayons and paper.

Method: Say 'I'm going to draw a circle'. Do so. Give the crayon to your child, saying 'You draw a circle'. Give three tries, demonstrating each time.

Score *plus* if your child draws an enclosed circular shape with the ends overlapping no more than 2 cm in two out of the three tries.

How to Teach

Work through the following steps, and begin teaching at the point where your child experiences difficulty.

1. *Stops when you say 'Stop', when making a circular movement.* Let your child make a couple of round-and-round movements, and then say 'Stop'. If he does not stop, lift his hand upward until he gets the idea. Continue until he stops without your help before moving on to step 2.

2. *Imitates a circle with a dot cue, plus verbal reminders.* Make a large dot on your paper. A stamp is helpful here. Say: 'I'm going to draw a circle. I put the crayon on the dot. I go round . . . back to the dot . . . STOP on the dot.' Help your child to do the same, repeating the directions. As your child gets the idea, gradually reduce your physical help until he can draw his circle without it. He should not continue for more than 2 cm beyond the dot.

3. *Imitates a circle with a dot cue, no verbal reminders.* Give a verbal reminder for the first circle only in each session, or following errors. Then stop the reminders altogether. Simply give your demonstrations and say 'You draw a circle'.

4. *Imitates a circle as in the main objective.* Now you can phase out your dot cues. Make your dots smaller and fainter, until they disappear altogether. Continue to give a demonstration every time. When your child can draw a circle with only your demonstration to help him, he has mastered the skill.

Playtime and Round-the-house Activities

Talk about circles whenever they occur. Practise making circles with a range of materials, including thick wool and strips of dough. Draw simple faces inside your child's circles — this is very reinforcing, so save it for good circles! You could also try drawing circles around pictures.

Remembering and Extending

This skill is directly extended by FM.F.90.

COPIES A CIRCLE

FM.F.90

Now your child can learn to draw a circle without watching you draw it first.

How to Assess

Materials: A crayon and paper. A card with a predrawn circle.

Method: Show the card to your child, saying 'Here is a circle'. Give him the crayon and paper, and say 'You draw a circle'. Hold the card where he can see it as he draws.

Score *plus* if your child draws a circle, with ends overlapping no more than 2 cm.

How to Teach

Run your child's finger around the predrawn circle, saying 'Look. It goes around . . . stop'. Then give him a crayon, saying 'You draw a circle'.

If your child persists in making errors, reassess imitating a circle (FM.F.89) and give a refresher course if necessary.

Playtime and Round-the-house Activities

As for FM.F.89.

Remembering and Extending

This sequence now introduces some different drawing skills — a relief for those who are tired of circles! But do continue to practise circles from time to time.

IMITATES A PLUS SIGN

FM.F.119

As well as extending the child's imitative skills, this activity teaches one of the most basic writing skills — that of making a shape with two lines.

How to Assess

Materials: Thick crayon and paper.

Method: Say 'Look what I can draw'. Draw a plus sign about 4 to 6 cm high. Give the crayon to your child, saying 'You do it'. Give three tries.

Score *plus* if your child draws intersecting vertical and horizontal lines in two out of the three tries. Size does not matter.

How to Teach

If your child has been working through this sequence, he should have no difficulty imitating horizontal and vertical lines separately. Revise them now if necessary.

Begin teaching this skill by adding the verbal reminders 'down' and 'across'. Remember to demonstrate each time. Continue until your child can imitate the figure with no reminders.

There are two main difficulties that occur in learning this skill. Some children have difficulty positioning their horizontal line so that it intersects the vertical line. You can help by pointing with your finger to the place where the horizontal line should start (to the left of the vertical line). Stop pointing when your child gets the idea. Other children sense that two lines are required, but draw vertical lines side by side. Guide your child's hand to make a plus, over and over again, so that he gets the feel of the figure. Demonstrate frequently and give verbal reminders at the same time, gradually reducing first your physical and then your verbal help.

Playtime and Round-the-house Activities

Add plus figures to your own creations when you are drawing alongside your child at playtime. Encourage him to copy you, while still giving him plenty of scope to make other shapes.

Intersecting lines that occur around the house can be traced with the fingers, while you say 'Look, this goes down and across'. Tiled walls and floors abound with pluses!

Remembering and Extending

This skill will be extended to copying a plus sign in FM.F.121. In the meantime maintain with practice.

IMITATES A V SHAPE

FM.F.120

Here is another basic writing skill — that of turning a corner to make an angled line.

How to Assess

Assess as for FM.F.119, drawing a V shape 4 to 6 cm high so that it is the right way up for the child.

Score *plus* if your child draws a V shape with approximately equal sides, without lifting his crayon from the paper. The bottom of the shape should be angled and not rounded.

How to Teach

Begin teaching by adding the reminder 'down and up' to your demonstrations and giving physical help if necessary. Gradually reduce first your physical help, and then your verbal reminders. Continue to give a demonstration every time.

Here are some difficulties that can occur, and some ways to help. Some children lift their crayons from the paper when they reach the bottom of the downward line. This is not surprising, as previously they have always been required to go down and stop. You can help by holding your child's hand in position as he makes the angle. Say 'Down . . . CRAYON ON PAPER . . . and up'. Reduce first your physical help, then your verbal help.

Some children trace back up their first line instead of making an angle. If this happens, try making three dots on the paper (a stamp makes this fast and easy). Teach your child to begin at the top, then go down to the bottom and up to the third dot. When he is doing this, make your dots smaller and lighter until they fade right away.

Other children go round at the bottom, making a U rather than a V. You can help by prompting your child to stop (with crayon on paper) before going up. Talking about 'points' has helped some children: 'Look, my V has a point. Does your V have a point? Let's make a point.' Touching the points on successful efforts and saying 'ouch' can be very motivating here!

Playtime and Round-the-house Activities

As for FM.F.119. V shapes are harder to find around the house, but some jumpers have them at the neck, a chain with a pendant has one, and so do the open blades of scissors.

Remembering and Extending

This skill can be extended to copying a V shape in the way described for a plus sign in the next skill in this sequence.

Play an imitation game in which lines, scribble, circles, pluses and Vs are interspersed. Don't forget to copy your child's lead some of the time.

COPIES A PLUS SIGN

FM.F.121

Assess and teach as for FM.F.90, but showing a predrawn plus on your card.

As an extension activity, alternate circles and pluses. You can teach your child to copy V as well.

DRAWS SIMPLE PICTURES

FM.F.122

Children usually begin to describe or name their drawings before the shapes they make are readily recognisable to others. When your child shows you a pattern of shapes and lines and tells you it is a car, he has made a big step forward — not necessarily in Fine Motor ability, but certainly in his concept of what drawing is about and the purposefulness with which he approaches it.

How to Assess

Method: Observe your child drawing.

Score *plus* if your child draws a picture and points out two features of the picture, such as a car and its wheel or a man and his hair or a house and its door. The picture need not look like the object named, but at least two different parts should be discernible. If your child names one only feature of the picture, you can ask him to tell you more about it.

How to Teach

Children love to watch other people drawing, so draw simple pictures for him, naming each part as you go. Let him choose what you will draw, and tell you what else is needed.

When your child is drawing, ask him from time to time to tell you about his drawing. Avoid asking 'What's that?' over and over again — your child may come to feel that something is required of him that he doesn't understand.

Avoid imposing your own interpretations on his drawings too — he may feel hurt that you think his train looks like a cow. Try making general statements and comments, such as 'That's an interesting shape' or 'Tell me about these lines' or 'Something's happening in that picture'.

If your child draws a single shape and names it for you, you can gently encourage him to add more by asking questions such as 'What colour will the wheels be?' Let him remain in control of his drawing; don't take it over by making too many direct suggestions.

Let your child be proud of his drawings. Write his name on them — and the name of his drawing, if he is interested in watching you write — and display them prominently.

Remembering and Extending

When your child is confidently drawing real objects, and naming them, you will gradually be able to introduce more direct instruction as you draw with him. Most children love drawing pictures of people they know, so this is a good time to start teaching your child to draw a face.

Encourage your child to make pictures with other materials as well, for example with paste and assorted scraps.

COLOURS IN AREAS USING TEMPLATES

FM.F.123

This is the beginning of colouring in.

A template is a flat piece of material with a shape cut out. A wipe-clean surface, such as plastic, works best. Your newsagent or toy seller may stock templates or could order some in for you. Choose templates with reasonably large, simple shapes. If you can't find a suitable template in the shops, improvise with plastic bangles or enclosed shapes cut in thick cardboard.

How to Assess

Materials: A crayon, paper and a template (as described above).

Method: Place the paper on the table and put the template over the paper. Demonstrate colouring inside the template, covering the entire area. Lift the template to show the results. Direct your child to have a turn. You may prompt him twice, if necesary, to 'Do some more'.

Score *plus* if your child colours inside the template so that 90% of the area is covered when the template is lifted.

How to Teach

Use plenty of verbal encouragement to motivate your child to colour in all of the area. Point out to him any uncoloured areas.

You could try lightly drawing a face or object on the paper and telling your child you are going to 'Hide the . . . '. Then make a game of persisting with the colouring (using the template as a guide) until the object is completely hidden.

Playtime and Round-the-house Activities

Try colouring inside the template with finger paint or brush and paint. It is easier to get a complete coverage with paint, so this will help your child to see what he is aiming for. Painting inside a large shape cut from cardboard, with small rollers, is great fun and gives a satisfying result.

Remembering and Extending

When your child has mastered this skill you could introduce a very simple colouring-in book. At this stage you should not expect your child to stay inside the lines (though you can demonstrate in your own work). It is more important that he colours an area thoroughly. Encourage him to colour different parts of the picture with different colours.

PAINTS SHAPES ON LARGE PAPER

FM.F.124

This item checks whether the child is using his drawing skills with other media, rather than just with paper and crayons. Most children, when they begin painting, are happy to cover the paper with a single colour or to make large blobs of colour. Making controlled shapes with the paint usually comes well after the child has begun to make controlled shapes with a crayon.

How to Assess

Materials: A large sheet of paper, preferably on an easel. Three or four tubs of paint and brushes.

Method: Observe your child while painting.

Score *plus* if your child paints large shapes such as circles and lines. He may then proceed to paint completely over these shapes, but can still score *plus*.

How to Teach

The more your child experiences paint, the sooner he will start to experiment with effects other than that of covering the paper.

Paint with your child and give him opportunities to watch other children painting.

Praise him for any controlled shapes he makes: 'That's a big circle' or 'I like those long blue lines.'

Playtime and Round-the-house Activities

Tape several large sheets of paper to an outside wall, to make a huge area of paper, and play an imitation game with your child. You draw a long, long line and ask him to copy you. Draw a row of spots and let him copy those. Then try an enormous circle. Ask your child to draw a shape for you to copy.

Remembering and Extending

Once your child is confidently drawing simple pictures (FM.F.122) you can suggest that he includes his favourite subject in his paintings too.

ADDS AN ARM OR A LEG TO AN INCOMPLETE MAN

FM.G.125

This item and the following one are concerned with the child's ability to draw body parts. Drawing a complete figure, with face, body and limbs, is a 4–5-year-old skill, but you can start teaching it now, through these activities.

How to Assess

Materials: A crayon, paper with a predrawn figure, one arm or leg missing.

Method: Place your drawing on the table. Say: 'Look, here's a man (or girl or boy or whatever). Something is missing. What's missing? You draw what's missing.'

Score ***plus*** if your child draws the missing body part in two out of three tries.

How to Teach

Draw the figure as your child watches, naming each part as you go. When you have almost finished, say: 'I'll draw one leg. You draw the other leg.'

When your child can do this, give him less information about what is required. Say: 'I'll draw one leg. What's missing?' Repeat this process, leaving out an arm instead of a leg. Finally, alternate missing arms and legs in a random pattern.

Then reassess to see if your child can add the missing part without having watched you draw the figure.

Playtime and Round-the-house Activities

Use every opportunity to talk about body parts. Count arms and legs. Draw plenty of simple figures without leaving anything out, and encourage your child to trace over them with his finger. Trace around your child's hands and feet when placed on paper, or trace his body shape with soap as he stands against a mirror. You could leave off a body part so that your child can complete the shape.

Remembering and Extending

Try leaving out two body parts. Instead of arms and legs, you could leave out the body or a face part or the hair. See also the extension activities listed after FM.F.126.

DRAWS A PERSON WITH AT LEAST THREE PARTS

FM.F.126

By the 4-year-old level of development, the child can be expected to draw a figure that has at least three recognisable parts.

Most children start by drawing simple faces and then add limbs that come directly out of the head. Many add details such as hands, feet and hair before they start to include a body. A complete figure, with body as well as limbs, may not appear before the child reaches school age. While you may encourage your child to add more to his drawings, the emphasis should be on praising him for what he has included.

How to Assess

Materials: A crayon and paper.

Method: Ask your child to 'Draw Mummy' or 'Draw Daddy'.

Score ***plus*** if your child draws a figure with at least three parts. Pairs of parts, such as eyes or legs, should count as one part. A drawing will score ***plus*** if it includes a circle, a pair of eyes and a mouth, or a circle with a pairs of legs and hair, and so on.

How to Teach

While only three parts are required to score on this item, you can, of course, teach your child to draw more parts.

If your child is not yet drawing faces, start there, teaching him to draw a circle with eyes, nose and mouth. It is a good idea to teach him to draw small circles for eyes, as dots are often hard to see. Use plenty of repetition in your teaching, so that your child learns the rhythm of drawing a face. For variety, you can draw a face with a part left out, for him to add.

Once he can draw a face, you can teach your child to add first legs, then arms, coming out of the face. Count the arms and legs as you draw, or as your child draws.

Later, you can show him how to add a body, hands and feet. Let his interests determine the order in which you introduce these other parts.

There is rarely any problem about teaching your child to add hair, as most children enjoy the chance to have a good scribble!

Give your child plenty of opportunities to draw figures without your guidance, so that you can observe his progress.

Playtime and Round-the-house Activities

Make figures with paste and scraps, as well as crayons. Making a life-size cardboard figure is fun, or you could make little figures to hang on the Christmas tree. In the kitchen, you could make gingerbread men.

REMEMBERING AND EXTENDING THIS SEQUENCE

Once your child has completed this sequence, you can go on to the following 4–5-year-old skills:

- Draws a figure with at least seven body parts.
- Draws pictures (other than figures) with four or more parts.
- Draws a square (start by teaching your child to join four dots).
- Paints figures or simple pictures.
- Draws within parallel lines, 1 cm apart — horizontal, vertical and circular.
- Traces lines — horizontal, vertical, then circular.
- Copies simple alphabet letters, such as t, c, w, i.
- Copies the first letter of his name, progressing gradually to his whole name.

Many of these 4–5-year-old skills are really writing skills. These can be just as enjoyable for the child as drawing skills, but do continue to give your child opportunities to draw and paint freely, following his own imagination.

CHAPTER 7

FM.G: Book Skills

The skills in this sequence, together with the associated language skills, open the way to one of the most rewarding activities you will share with your child — and, in the future, one of your child's most important sources of learning and recreation.

This sequence looks at the basic Fine Motor skills used in handling books — skills such as looking, turning pages and pointing to pictures. In the Receptive Language Sequences you will find activities for helping your child to learn the meanings of words, using books and pictures. And of course, books can be included in the materials you use for teaching your child to communicate with others. Looking at books together with others is an important social activity, too, and is an excellent way to teach a child to attend jointly to something of common interest.

With the increasing recognition of the importance of books in the lives of young children, there have been tremendous advances in the quality and variety of children's books available. This has been particularly striking in the area of cardboard books, which once confined themselves largely to repetitive pictures of animals and toys. Board books are now available at many levels of complexity, covering all kinds of topics. Paper books suitable for very young children, and early storybooks, have shown a similar improvement.

If your bookseller is not adventurous in his or her choice of children's books, explain your needs and ask for some suitable books to be ordered in. Or ask your local librarian for help. Look too for magazines and books designed to help parents in their choice of children's books — recent titles are *The Good Book Guide to Children's Books* (Australian edition), edited by Bing Taylor and Peter Braithwaite, and *The Read Aloud Handbook* (Australian edition) by Jim Trelease. Both are published by Penguin.

You can also make your own books, by drawing or pasting pictures on cardboard, covering them with self-adhesive plastic film, punching holes and tying loosely with string or wool. Your child will love turning the page to find a photo of someone he loves or something he knows well.

Below we list all the skills in this sequence.

9 to 12 months
41. Looks at a book with an adult.

12 to 15 months
48. Pats a picture on the page.
49. Helps turn pages.

15 to 18 months
54. Turns pages of a cardboard book.
55. Turns two or three pages of a paper book at a time.

18 months to 2 years
64. Turns pages of a paper book singly.

2 to 3 years
98. Points to small features in picture books.
99. Looks at books independently.

LOOKS AT A BOOK WITH AN ADULT

FM.G.41

This skill is listed at the 9–12 months' level of development, but of course there's no need to wait until your child is 9 months old if he's showing an interest, however fleeting, at an earlier age.

For your child's very first books, choose books with large, colourful pictures, preferably with only one or two pictures to an opening. If your child wants to grab at the book, choose some of the excellent cardboard books now available.

How to Assess

Materials: A picture book with large, colourful pictures.

Method: Sit your child on your lap. Turn the pages slowly, talking about each picture to your child.

Score *plus* if your child looks at the pictures while you talk for at least two minutes.

How to Teach

Set aside a time each day to look at books — a quiet time when your child is content to sit in your lap, but is not too sleepy to attend.

Always tell him what you are going to do — 'Let's look at a book'.

Name each picture and help him to maintain his interest through your commentary. You could make a noise associated with the picture ('Dog says woof woof!', 'Car goes brmmm') or sing an appropriate song.

Leave plenty of pauses in your commentary so that your child can make contributions to the conversation.

Look ahead now to the next skills in this sequence — you can start teaching these skills as soon as your child is showing an interest in his books.

Playtime and Round-the-house Activities

Show your child pictures in other contexts too — in photo albums, in magazines, on food packets and so on.

Your child is sure to discover other things he can do with books, besides looking at the pictures. Books are fun to chew and to tear, and pulling out all the books in the bookshelves is many a child's delight! Decide now on the rules you want your child to follow and begin now to teach these rules. Consider giving your child one book to tear (perhaps an old telephone directory) and one shelf which is his to rearrange.

Remembering and Extending

Continue with the next two items in this sequence — FM.G.48 (pats a picture on the page) and FM.G.49 (helps turn pages).

PATS A PICTURE ON THE PAGE

FM.G.48

It is natural to point to pictures as you talk about them. Your child will learn to do this too. To start with, he will pat the pictures, using his whole hand.

How to Assess

Assess as for FM.G.41, pointing to each picture as you talk about it.

Score *plus* if your child imitates your pointing by patting, or spontaneously pats. He should pat individual pictures, while looking at the page.

How to Teach

Point to each picture as you look at books with your child. If your child does not copy you, take his wrist and lightly guide him to pat the pictures. Give him plenty of opportunities to pat pictures without your help.

You can ask 'Where's . . . ?' or 'Show me . . . ', to encourage your child to point, but do not expect him to make a correct choice between alternatives until he has reached this level in the Receptive Language Sequences.

Remembering and Extending

You can gradually refine your child's patting into pointing as you continue with this sequence and Receptive Language exercises requiring the child to point. See FM.B.28 (pokes at holes in a pegboard) for ways to encourage pointing.

HELPS TURN PAGES

FM.G.49

This item and the following three items are concerned with the child's ability to turn pages. This is quite a complex skill, and it will help your child if you start very early to encourage him to participate when you turn the pages.

How to Assess

Materials: A book with stiff pages, such as a cardboard book.

Method: Read the book with your child, turning the pages slowly.

Score *plus* if your child uses his hands to 'help' turn the page. He may pick up the next page, or push it down as it is turned.

How to Teach

If your child does not participate when you turn the page, teach as for the next skill in this sequence, FM.G.54 (turns pages of a cardboard book), and begin by separating the pages yourself.

TURNS PAGES OF A CARDBOARD BOOK

FM.G.54

Once your child can turn pages of cardboard books by himself, he will be able to start looking through these books on his own. Of course, this should not mean the end of looking through such books with you!

How to Assess

Materials: A book with cardboard pages.
Method: Hold the book open in front of your child. Demonstrate turning a page. Ask your child to turn a page.

Score *plus* if your child separates and turns one page.

How to Teach

To begin with, separate the page to be turned from the others by placing your finger in between. Guide your child's hand to slide between the pages and turn the page over.

Gradually reduce the space you allow between the pages. If your child lifts more than one page, say: 'You've missed one. Turn one page.' You can give a further reminder by demonstrating the use of the forefinger to lift one page away from the others.

Playtime and Round-the-house Activities

Include books in your child's play materials and let him enjoy them on his own, as well as with you. There should be no need to set aside special time to teach page-turning, as books will be part of the natural pattern of your day, brought out at rest-time and bedtime, and whenever you have a quiet moment together.

Remembering and Extending

This skill is extended by the next two skills in this sequence, which teach the child to turn the pages of a paper book.

TURNS TWO OR THREE PAGES OF A PAPER BOOK AT A TIME

FM.G.55

Turning paper pages is considerably harder than turning cardboard pages, largely because of the difficulty of separating a single page from the rest. We present two levels at which the skill can be assessed, but all teaching can be done as described under FM.G.64 (turns pages of a paper book singly).

When you are choosing your child's first paper books, look for simple, colourful picture books and short stories which show a picture for every event.

How to Assess

Materials: A child's picture book with paper pages.
Method: Demonstrate turning a page and ask your child to turn a page. Give several tries.

Score *plus* if your child turns two or three pages at a time without assistance.

How to Teach

Teach as for FM.G.64, praising your child for turning small groups of pages to start with, and then aiming for single pages.

TURNS PAGES OF A PAPER BOOK SINGLY

FM.G.64

This item is the culmination of the page-turning skills in this sequence.

How to Assess

Materials: A child's picture book with paper pages.
Method: Place the book on the table or floor in front of your child. Demonstrate turning pages, then say 'You turn the page'.

Score *plus* if your child turns the pages one at a time for three or more pages.

How to Teach

As with cardboard books, separating the pages is the hardest part of this skill.

Using demonstrations, and physical help if necessary, teach your child to lift up the top right corner of the page with his forefinger and then slide his hand between the pages. Reduce your help gradually until he is doing this all by himself.

Playtime and Round-the-house Activities

Besides turning pages, there are other activities which involve the skill of separating one piece of paper from another. If your child enjoys pasting, give him a tray of pictures cut from magazines, scraps of wrapping paper and so on. Let him pick them up from the tray, one at a time, and paste them onto paper, cardboard tubes or empty boxes. Separating sheets of cellophane provides quite a challenge! Many children enjoy peeling self-adhesive stickers from their backing. You could also wrap your child's sandwiches in grease-proof paper and let him open the parcel. Plastic food wrap provides the ultimate challenge — even for adults!

Remembering and Extending

As long as your child finds enjoyment in books, you will not need to plan opportunities to practise turning pages!

POINTS TO SMALL FEATURES IN PICTURE BOOKS

FM.G.98

Here we look again at the skill of pointing to pictures, introduced in FM.G.48 (pats a picture on the page).

In your Receptive Language work, you will have been teaching your child to choose between different pictures, indicating his choice with a point. Here the emphasis is different; this item does not require the child to choose between alternatives, but rather to bring his pointing finger accurately to a very small feature on a page. It requires close co-ordination between hand and eye.

How to Assess

Materials: A book with detailed pictures or many small pictures to a page.

Method: Point to a picture on the page or to a small detail within a picture. Say: 'Look, here's the pig's ear (or the wheel of the truck or a caterpillar on a leaf or whatever). You point to the pig's ear.'

Score *plus* if your child can successfully imitate you and point correctly to the specified picture.

How to Teach

Gradually introduce your child to books with more detailed pictures.

Demonstrate pointing to small details in the pictures, always naming them, of course.

Guide your child's hand to point, if necessary, gradually reducing your help. Give him plenty of time to respond to your directions. To begin with it may take him some time to bring his finger to the precise place that you have specified.

Playtime and Round-the-house Activities

Use magazines and pictures on the walls, as well as books. Using family photographs, encourage your child to point out faces that he knows. You could cut up unwanted photographs and assemble them into a collage, under self-adhesive film.

Remembering and Extending

As your child acquires the necessary Receptive Language skills, you can phase out your demonstrations and let him find details in the pictures himself. Practice in the Fine Motor skill of pointing then becomes combined with practice in the Receptive Language skill of choosing between alternatives.

Ask your child to point out details that interest him, by asking an open-ended question like 'What can you see in this picture?' or 'Which picture do you like?'

LOOKS AT BOOKS INDEPENDENTLY

FM.G.99

Looking at books with you will remain important to your child for years to come, but this is also an activity he can enjoy on his own. You want your child to become more self-sufficient in his play, for his sake as well as your own, and looking quietly at books can provide him with hours of constructive enjoyment throughout his life.

How to Assess

Materials: Picture books and simple storybooks enjoyed by your child.

Method: Observe your child as he looks at books on his own.

Score *plus* if your child will sit and look at at least two books consecutively, without adult attention. He should look at most of the pages, in their correct order.

How to Teach

Teach by encouragement (this includes supplying a range of interesting books) and, just as importantly, by example. Ensure that there is a time each day, however brief, when you sit with your book and your child sits with his.

Young children are more likely to look independently at books they know well, so don't hesitate to read his favourite books to him over and over. Children enjoy and learn from such repetition.

If you let your child help to choose his bedtime stories, you will probably find that old favourites are chosen again and again, and that these may be the books he chooses most often to 'read' to himself.

Playtime and Round-the-house Activities

Your child might enjoy 'reading' a book to his assembled soft toys and dolls or to a special doll that he is putting to bed. He may also enjoy making 'pretend' storybooks out of paper, using magazine pages or illustrating blank pages with his crayons. Encourage him to 'read' his books, to himself or to you. It doesn't matter if his story makes no sense; what is important here is that he is incorporating his book skills into his play.

When you feel he is ready, you could give him time to read a book or two to himself at bedtime. Do this as well as, and not instead of, reading to him yourself.

REMEMBERING AND EXTENDING THIS SEQUENCE

By now books will be such an established part of your child's life that you won't need to plan opportunities to practise.

The next big step forward comes when your child begins to learn to read. When the time comes, approach this new step with confidence. Many children with intellectual disabilities can and do learn to read. Our experience at Macquarie tells us that any child who is able to progress through this Program will be able to acquire some reading skills, and many of the children with Down's Syndrome who have gone on to normal schools have been able to keep pace with their classmates in reading for many years. We hope you will give it a try with your child.

CHAPTER 8

FM.H: Problem Solving and Puzzles

In this sequence you will find activities designed to teach the child to use his skills of hand and eye to solve problems.

There are different kinds of problems within the sequence, including:

- How do I put this in there?
- How do I get that out of there?
- How do I put this together?
- How do I make mine look like hers?

You will find several areas of overlap between this and other sequences, especially with Sequence FM.E: Manipulative Skills. Ideally, these sequences should be taught together.

The ability to solve puzzles is in large measure the ability to try again if things don't work out the first time. The activities presented here are designed, in part, to encourage the child to persevere until he finds a solution.

Many of the skills in this sequence involve formboards, interlocking puzzles or jigsaw puzzles. These require carefully selected materials. Even city dwellers have to go out of their way to hunt for suitable puzzles and for people in isolated areas the difficulties are much greater. If you have a local preschool or toy library, the staff will help you to identify suitable puzzles and will know how to order them. Your local toy seller could also help by obtaining catalogues and ordering materials for you. Some of the best puzzles we have seen have been home-made.

We will describe the materials you need in detail at the start of each item in the sequence. But first, one general point about puzzles. Many puzzles for small children come with small knobs on each piece. These are helpful in pulling the pieces out, but they can cause difficulties when it comes to putting them in again. Many children tend to hold the piece by the knob, and try to turn it by twiddling the knob around. This does not give the children enough control over the piece, and the result is frustration. Sometimes these puzzles are specifically recommended for handicapped children, but in our experience they create more problems than they solve. Look for puzzles without knobs, or pull them out with pliers. If you are stuck with them, discourage your child from using them. He will do much better if his fingers are placed firmly on the surface of the puzzle piece.

Below we list all the skills in this sequence.

9 to 12 months
39. Nests two cups.

12 to 15 months
51. Lifts the lid from a small box to find a toy or raisin.
52. Inverts a small bottle to obtain a raisin in imitation.

15 to 18 months
56. Puts a square in the formboard (no choice).
57. Inverts a small bottle to obtain a raisin, no demonstration.

18 months to 2 years
65. Puts together four nesting cups.
66. Puts a triangle in the formboard (no choice).
67. Puts a circle in the formboard, choice of three.
68. Puts a square in the formboard, choice of three.
69. Puts a triangle in formboard, choice of three.

2 to 3 years
72. Completes a one-piece puzzle.
73. Completes a one-piece puzzle, six pieces removed.
74. Completes a three-piece interlocking puzzle.
75. Builds a train in imitation.
76. Searches for the causal mechanism.

3 to 4 years
100. Completes a six-piece puzzle (unseen).
101. Completes an eight-piece puzzle (unseen).
102. Completes a four-piece jigsaw puzzle.
103. Builds a bridge in imitation.
104. Places five blocks in serial order.
105. Makes a mechanical toy work, with no demonstration.

NESTS TWO CUPS

FM.H.39

Here is an activity in which one object must be put inside another. It strengthens the skill acquired in FM.D.38. (places a peg in a can).

In this activity, the child must work out which cup goes inside. If he tries to put the big cup into the smaller one, he will have no success. He must try another way in order to nest the cups together. The notion of trying again, or trying another way, is central to this sequence, and you can begin to teach it with this activity. It doesn't matter whether or not the child 'knows' the difference between big and little, as long as he can persevere until he discovers the solution.

A set of nesting cups will be useful to you for quite some time, so it is worthwhile to buy one now. Look for round cups rather than square ones. Most nesting cup sets can be built into towers, as well as nested together, which increases their versatility.

How to Assess

Materials: Two nesting cups of distinctly different size. If you have a set of cups, choose two which are three sizes apart.

Method: Demonstrate putting one cup inside the other. Take the cups apart and put them on the table, saying 'You do it'. Give three tries, varying the position in which you place the cups each time.

Score *plus* if your child places one cup inside the other in two out of the three tries. He may score *plus* if he makes a mistake on any try and then corrects his own mistake without your help.

How to Teach

The Fine Motor skill required for this task is much the same as that learned in FM.D.38 (places a peg in a can). Teach it in the same way.

In this activity, the child must also recognise, or work out by trial-and-error, which cup is smaller. When he tries to put the larger cup inside the smaller one, say: 'Doesn't fit. Try again.' Always give your child the chance to correct his mistake himself before stepping in with physical help.

Place the smaller cup sometimes on the right, and sometimes on the left, so that he does not learn to recognise the smaller cup by its position alone.

As your child gets the idea, omit even your verbal reminders when he makes a mistake. Pause first, to see if he corrects his mistake without a reminder.

Playtime and Round-the-house Activities

This skill can be practised with any containers that fit one inside the other.

Remembering and Extending

This skill is directly extended in FM.H.65 (puts together four nesting cups). In the meantime, add an extra challenge by giving your child square or oblong containers to nest together — such as two shoe boxes of different sizes. You can also use the smaller cups in your nesting cup set, and work with pairs of cups that are closer together in size.

LIFTS THE LID FROM A SMALL BOX TO FIND A TOY OR RAISIN

FM.H.51

Do not teach this skill until your child has completed (or nearly completed) Sequence FM.C: Object Permanence. The child knows that there is something in the box — but how to get it out???

How to Assess

Materials: A small box with a lid that comes well down over the sides of the box. It should be small enough for your child to handle easily. A small toy or raisin.

Method: Demonstrate by placing the toy in the box and then finding it. Put the toy in again, and present the box to your child, saying 'Where's the toy?'

Score *plus* if your child successfully lifts the lid and finds the toy.

How to Teach

You will need a variety of boxes, including at least one with a very loose lid, and a collection of small objects.

Begin by giving repeated demonstrations and helping your child to copy you. Use the box with the loose-fitting lid so that your child achieves success easily.

Reduce your help and introduce more challenging boxes as your child gets the idea. If he has difficulty getting the lid off, urge him to 'Keep trying' or 'Try again'.

If your child does not attempt to look for the toy, go back to Sequence FM.C for some more practice at object permanence activities.

Playtime and Round-the-house Activities

Hiding games are the order of the day! Use all kinds of containers; ideally they will have a lid, but this is not strictly necessary. The important thing is that your child finds a way to get the toy out of the container. Let him do the hiding sometimes. He will enjoy watching you look and you can role-play that important strategy of trying again. Try unwrapping parcels too.

Remembering and Extending

Hiding games can grow more complex and more challenging as your child progresses. The next skill in this sequence, FM.H.52, presents another way that objects can be retrieved.

INVERTS A SMALL BOTTLE TO OBTAIN A RAISIN IN IMITATION

FM.H.52

Your child can solve this problem if he copies what you do.

How to Assess

Materials: A small clear glass bottle about 8 cm high, such as an empty medicine or food colouring bottle. Raisins.

Method: Place the raisin in the bottle and show your child. Then tip over the bottle and find the raisin. Put in another raisin and give the bottle to your child.

Score *plus* if your child tips the bottle over so that the raisin falls out, and then looks for the raisin.

How to Teach

Eating the raisin is a wonderful reinforcement for this activity! Teach through repeated demonstrations and physical help if necessary. The latter should be gradually reduced as your child gets the idea.

Playtime and Round-the-house Activities

Practise this skill with a variety of clear, easy-to-hold containers. The tipping action can be practised in the bath — it's fun to watch the water pour out. Sand pours well too.

Remembering and Extending

Once your child has mastered this skill, you will stop giving demonstrations, as explained in FM.H.57.

PUTS A SQUARE IN THE FORMBOARD (NO CHOICE)

FM.H.56

Teach FM.D.44 (puts a circle in the formboard) before beginning this activity.

The problem here is how to turn the square around so that it goes into the hole. When you put the circle into the formboard (FM.D.44) there were no corners to get in the way — whichever angle you pushed from, the circle would slide in. Squares, however, require persistence and a readiness to try again.

For this and the other formboard items in this sequence you will need a formboard with a square, a triangle (with equal sides) and a circle. If your formboard has extra shapes, you can keep them covered. Boards are sometimes available which have several examples of a particular shape (squares, triangles, etc.), but it is more economical to buy a board which contains one of each shape. Commercially available formboards are often very dreary-looking objects, so feel free to decorate — while preserving the distinctness of the shapes. If you are lucky enough to find someone who will make one specially for you, try to make each shape part of a picture — the circle could be the sun, the square could be a house and the triangle could be the roof. Ideally shapes should be about 8 to 10 cm across.

If you cannot find a formboard of any description, go straight to FM.H.72, choosing the simplest one-piece puzzle you can find — one with fairly large pieces depicting familiar objects. Keep in mind that a piece with a slightly irregular shape, such as an orange, can be harder to align with the hole than a piece with a distinctive shape, such as a banana.

But let's assume now that you have found a formboard, and look at how to assess and teach this task.

How to Assess

Materials: A formboard, with at least one square shape, as described above.

Method: Demonstrate putting the square in. Hand the square to the child and say 'Put the square in the square'. Give three tries.

Score *plus* if your child places the square in the hole, without physical or verbal help, in at least two of the three tries.

How to Teach

Work through the following steps to decide where teaching should begin.

1. *Pushes a square into a hole when helped to place the square on the board and move it into position for the final push.* In this step, the child is asked to do only the very last part of the task independently. But do begin by handing the square to him and helping him to do all the steps that he will ultimately do by himself. If you position the square for him, without guiding his hands through the movement, he will not experience the feel of the exercise. Use a consistent direction: 'Put it in.' Encourage him to put the flats of his fingers on the piece. Poking with a finger-tip will not get him far. Some children do better when using both hands to push. The right way is the way that feels most comfortable and gets the best results for your child.

2. *Moves the square into position and pushes it in, with verbal help.* Continue to help your child to place the square on the board, but take your hand away before the square is aligned with the hole. Say 'Put it in'. If the square is at an angle to the hole, say 'Turn it round'. Give physical help at this stage if necessary. Always help your child turn the piece, never turn the piece for him. Reduce your physical help as he gets the idea.

3. *Places the square on the board, moves it into position and pushes it in, with verbal help.* When he achieves this step, your child will be able to do all stages of the task independently, with only verbal directions to help him. There are three basic directions: 'Put it on the board' and 'Turn it around' and 'Push it in.'

4. *Places the square in the formboard without physical or verbal help*, as in the main objective.

Playtime and Round-the-house Activities

Your child could now try putting the square shape in the square hole in his posting box. He might also enjoy putting lids on boxes at this stage.

Remembering and Extending

When your child has mastered this skill, continue the sequence, giving occasional practice with squares.

INVERTS A SMALL BOTTLE TO OBTAIN A RAISIN, NO DEMONSTRATION

FM.H.57

This is a direct extension of FM.H.52. Your child should now have a firm concept that objects can be retrieved by tipping the container.

How to Assess

Materials: As for FM.H.52.
Method: Let the child watch as you put the raisin in the bottle, but do not demonstrate the tipping action. Do not assess this item immediately after a teaching session on FM.H.52; you will get a clearer idea if you leave the activity for a few days before assessing this item.

Score *plus* if your child tips the bottle over so that the raisin falls out, and looks for the raisin.

How to Teach

Continue teaching as for FM.H.52, then take a break for a few days before reassessing. Repeat until your child scores *plus* on assessment.

Playtime and Round-the-house Activities

Provide your child with a variety of containers containing objects and watch him to see whether he spontaneously uses the tipping action. If he does, he has mastered the skill.

Remembering and Extending

For more challenging activities, try putting objects inside long cardboard cylinders, such as the kind that are used for mailing posters. Or use a long thin container with a lid, so that your child must combine the skills of removing the lid and tipping the container.

PUTS TOGETHER FOUR NESTING CUPS

FM.H.65

This is an extension of FM.H.39 (nesting two cups). Now the child has four cups to nest together.

Choose four cups that fit loosely into each other, for example every second cup from a set.

How to Assess

Materials: A set of four loosely fitting cups, as described above.
Method: Spread the cups on the table in front of your child. Say 'Look, I can put them together'. Demonstrate. Separate cups, placing them in random order. Say 'You put them together'. Give three tries.

Score *plus* if your child puts the nesting toy together, without physical or verbal help, in two out of the three tries.

How to Teach

You can work through three steps in teaching this skill.

1. *Puts together a two-part nesting toy (as in FM.H.39).*
2. *Puts together a three-part nesting toy.*
3. *Puts together a four-part nesting toy.*

In all steps, start by saying 'Find the big one'. When your child has found it, say 'Put it here', pointing to the middle of the table. Indicate the remaining cups, and say: 'Now which is the big one? Put it in.' Continue until only one cup remains.

If your child chooses the wrong cup, let him go ahead, so that he learns for himself that it won't work. Say: 'Doesn't fit! Try another one.'

When your child has put all the cups together, help him to shake them so that he gets a feel for the finished product. This is reinforcing, too.

Playtime and Round-the-house Activities

The kitchen cupboards are a good source of alternative materials. A set of mixing bowls works very well. Outside, you could use empty plant pots.

Remembering and Extending

Once your child has mastered this skill, you can add more cups to his set.

Many sets of nesting cups are designed so that they can also be stacked up to make a tower. As your child progresses through this sequence, look for other toys which involve putting things together in order of size. These include jigsaw puzzles which show a row of the same object in different sizes, and rings which fit over a tapered stick.

PUTS A TRIANGLE IN THE FORMBOARD (NO CHOICE)

FM.H.66

As a triangle has fewer corners than a square, it must be turned a little further to align it with its hole.

Assess and teach as for FM.H.56, using the triangle rather than the square. The triangle must have three equal sides.

PUTS A CIRCLE IN THE FORMBOARD, CHOICE OF THREE

FM.H.67

PUTS A SQUARE IN THE FORMBOARD, CHOICE OF THREE

FM.H.68

PUTS A TRIANGLE IN THE FORMBOARD, CHOICE OF THREE

FM.H.69

In these three items, the child has two problems to solve: how to get the shapes into the hole and which hole to choose. All three items can be assessed together.

How to Assess

Materials: A formboard showing a circle, a square and a triangle. Any other shapes should be covered.

Method: Remove all three shapes from the formboard, and give one shape to your child. Say 'Put the . . . in the . . .'.

Repeat, giving three tries for each shape, and turning the board between tries.

If your child loses attention after a few tries, assess shapes on different days.

Score *plus* for an item if your child places that shape in the formboard, without assistance, in at least two out of three tries.

How to Teach

Begin teaching with the circle, which is the easiest shape to move into the hole.

Give your child a choice of two shapes, say the circle and the square. If your child goes to put the circle into the other hole, say: 'Doesn't fit. Try another hole.' If necessary, point to the round hole, saying 'Look, circle goes in circle'. Avoid moving the circle for your child.

Turn the board around so that the circle is in a different position, and repeat.

When your child has mastered this challenge, go on to offer other shapes, still with a choice of two.

Lastly, offer a choice of three, again beginning with the circle.

Playtime and Round-the-house Activities

Your child's posting box will provide a good backup activity. If you have a toy library near by, look for different formboards, or vary your own by sticking different pictures in the holes.

If your child seems to tire of formboard activities at any stage during teaching, put the board away for a few days and go on with items from other sequences. Don't feel you have to rush through these items; they should be interspersed with a variety of other activities.

Remembering and Extending

Once your child has mastered these skills, he will be ready to go on to one-piece puzzles (FM.H.72). These puzzles will allow him to use all the skills he has learned with his formboard. There is no need for him to use the formboard again unless he has difficulty with the next task and needs more practice with regular shapes.

COMPLETES A ONE-PIECE PUZZLE

FM.H.72

What is a one-piece puzzle? It is a puzzle which contains one or more pictures, each picture corresponding to a single puzzle piece. The pieces do not touch or lock together; each one is quite self-contained.

Look for puzzles which show several different familiar objects. Puzzles showing rows of the same object in different sizes, or the same figure performing different actions, are harder and should be left until later.

The best puzzles we have seen have one or two rows of familiar objects, each with a fairly simple shape. Naming the objects will also help the child's language development.

Please refer to the note about knobs at the beginning of this sequence.

How to Assess

Materials: A one-piece puzzle.

Method: Remove one piece only and hand it to your child. Say 'Put the . . . in'. Give four tries, preferably using a different piece each time.

Score *plus* if your child puts the pieces in, in three out of the four tries.

How to Teach

For teaching purposes it is preferable to have a variety of one-piece puzzles. Start teaching with the easiest one you have.

Teach in the same way as for the formboard pieces.

Encourage your child to look for cues about the way the piece should go. 'Look, the car is upside down! You turn it around.'

Continue until your chid can put in at least five different shapes.

Remember that only one piece should be removed from the puzzle at a time.

Playtime and Round-the-house Activities

If you always sit your child at a table for his teaching sessions, try working on his puzzles on the floor from time to time, as the different height will present a new challenge.

Remembering and Extending

Some one-piece puzzles are harder than others, so there is plenty of scope for extending your child's skills through the materials you choose.

Give plenty of practice at this level before moving on to the next item in this sequence.

COMPLETES A ONE-PIECE PUZZLE, SIX PIECES REMOVED

FM.H.73

Once a child has learned to put pieces into a puzzle, he is ready to meet the new challenge of deciding which hole to try.

How to Assess

Materials: A one-piece puzzle (as described for FM.H.72) with six or more shapes.

Method: Remove six pieces from the puzzle. Demonstrate putting one piece in, them remove it again. Say 'You put all the pieces in'.

Score *plus* if your child puts all six pieces into the puzzle without help.

How to Teach

As with the formboard, teach by removing just two pieces to start with, then three, then four and so on.

Refer again to the teaching methods described for FM.H.67, 68 and 69.

Playtime and Round-the-house Activities

As for FM.H.74. It is important to provide a variety of puzzles.

Remembering and Extending

Both in the difficulty of the individual pieces and in the range of choices open to your child, there is considerable scope for extension with one-piece puzzles. These puzzles will remain appropriate and constructive toys for your child long after he has started to complete simple interlocking puzzles (FM.H.74).

COMPLETES A THREE-PIECE INTERLOCKING PUZZLE

FM.H.74

We use the term 'interlocking puzzle' to describe a puzzle which has adjoining pieces set into a board or tray. When all the pieces are removed, the edges of the board provide an outline of the picture to be made. Usually, each piece of the puzzle represents a distinct part of the picture, and this is the kind of puzzle to look for when you begin teaching. For instance, the puzzle might show a figure, such as a child or a Teddy Bear. One piece represents the head, another the body and so on. Or the puzzle might show a train, and have a piece for each wheel, one for the driver's cabin and others for the carriages.

This kind of puzzle gives the child clear clues about where each piece should go, unlike a jigsaw puzzle where an entire picture is cut into abstract shapes at random.

Very few interlocking puzzles have just three pieces, but don't worry — you can use one with about six pieces, removing only three pieces at a time.

Your child will need a variety of such puzzles. They are available from educational toy shops, and your toy library or local preschool may be able to help you.

How to Assess

Materials: A three-piece puzzle, or a larger puzzle with three adjoining pieces removed. See the notes above for more information about puzzles.
Method: Place the puzzle in front of your child, with the pieces on your child's preferred hand side. Say 'Put the pieces in'. Repeat with another three-piece puzzle, or with a different three pieces removed.

Score *plus* if your child puts all the pieces in the puzzle, in both tries, without physical or verbal help.

How to Teach

It is essential to have a variety of puzzles — not necessarily all at once. If you buy six-piece puzzles, you will be able to use them for some time. But borrowing is the best way, if this is possible for you. Aim to use at least three puzzles.

If you are using a six-piece puzzle, you can start by removing three pieces that do not adjoin. This will be much the same as working on a one-piece puzzle with three pieces removed. Once your child has mastered this step, you can take out three pieces that do adjoin.

Puzzles have the advantage that the more pieces you put in, the easier they get. It is the first piece which provides the greatest challenge. Give several tries in each teaching session, so that your child has plenty of practice at putting this first piece in.

Use consistent verbal cues when teaching puzzle skills. The most useful ones are 'Turn it around' and 'Try another way'.

Playtime and Round-the-house Activities

To help your child's visual sense of how things fit together, you could cut some magazine pictures in half and help him work out how to put them together again.

Remembering and Extending

This skill will be directly extended by FM.H.100 (completing a six-piece puzzle.) You can move towards this goal gradually, by taking out four pieces and then five.

BUILDS A TRAIN IN IMITATION

FM.H.75

The problem here is to reproduce an arrangement of blocks that is demonstrated by the teacher. This can be seen as an advanced imitation skill.

The ability to line up blocks in a neat row is also an important Fine Motor skill, requiring controlled, deliberate placement.

In addition, this activity is something quite new and good fun!

How to Assess

Materials: Six small cubes, about 3 cm across.
Method: Say: 'We're going to build a train. I put block beside block, and block beside block.' Place three blocks in a straight line, touching. Push the train across the floor or table with one finger, saying 'Ch-ch-ch-ch-ch'. Give the remaining three blocks to your child, saying 'You make a train'. Give three tries, demonstrating yourself each time.

Score *plus* if your child makes a train in two out of the three tries without any help.

How to Teach

Work through the following steps to find the right place to start teaching.

1. *Adds a third block to complete a train.* Make your own train, then say 'Now, let's make your train'. Put the second block beside the first and then give the third block to your child. Say 'Put the block beside block'. If your child goes to put

his block on top of the blocks, point to the correct place and repeat 'Block beside block'. Encourage your child to push his train, saying 'Ch-ch-ch-ch'. Remember to give a demonstration every time you start a train.

2. *Adds two blocks to the first block to make a train, with verbal help and physical help.* After making your own train, place your child's first block in position and say 'You make a train'. You can give extra verbal help by saying 'Put block beside block'. Give physical help by pointing to the place where the next block should go.

3. *Makes a train with verbal help only.* Phase out your physical help. If your child makes errors, draw his attention to your own train, pointing out that the blocks go beside the blocks.

4. *Builds a train in imitation,* as in the main objective. Phase out your verbal help. Encourage your child to watch you closely as you build your train.

Playtime and Round-the-house Activities

Encourage your child to build trains with his larger building blocks as he plays on the floor. It may add interest to the activity if you focus on 'real' trains while you teach this skill.

Remembering and Extending

Once your child has mastered this skill, he might enjoy making longer trains. You can help him to remember the skill by involving it when you play together with blocks. You can also try lining up other objects (cars, dolls, etc. — or pegs on a pegboard) and encourging your child to copy you. Remember that this is an imitation skill as well as a Fine Motor skill, and you can extend your child's imitation skills with all sorts of activities. You will find another imitation activity using blocks at FM.H.103 (builds a bridge in imitation).

SEARCHES FOR THE CAUSAL MECHANISM

FM.H.76

As a child approaches the 3-year-old level of development, he develops an interest in how things work. When he discovers a new mechanical toy, it is no longer enough to ask someone else to get it going — he must see if he can figure it out for himself. So he searches the toy for buttons or knobs and tries different ways to get it started. A child's ability to try different ways is clearly evident in this activity.

How to Assess

Materials: A simple wind-up toy.
Method: Show your child the toy 'in action', without letting him see you wind it up.

Score *plus* if your child searches the toy to find out how to make it work. He need not succeed in getting it going to score *plus*.

How to Teach

Wind-up toys, push-button toys, cars that operate by friction or by a backwards pull and toys that operate when a string is pulled are all useful for encouraging this skill.

Whenever you encounter such a toy, give your child the opportunity to search for the causal mechanism. If he cannot find it, search with him, encouraging him to try different alternatives.

Playtime and Round-the-house Activities

You might show your child how gadgets around the house can be turned on and off — with an eye to safety, of course. Perhaps he could be shown how to use a simple cassette player.

Remembering and Extending

Continue to give your child the opportunity to work things out for himself as he encounters new toys. When you give him that special birthday present, you will be keen to show him what it can do, but do give him a little time to explore it first.

COMPLETES A SIX-PIECE PUZZLE (UNSEEN)

FM.H.100

This is an extension of FM.H.74 (completing a three-piece puzzle). Many children benefit from working on four and then five-piece puzzles in between these two activities.

Six-piece puzzles vary greatly in their degree of difficulty. They range from those which show the silhouette of a figure when all the pieces are removed, to those that show a large space which gives few clues as to what goes where. Start with the easier ones, moving gradually to those that give fewer clues. Choose only puzzles in which the shapes are set into the board, so that the outer edges are defined.

If you are planning to buy or borrow some new puzzles at this stage, you could include some eight-piece puzzles, as you will need these for the next item in this sequence. You can leave two pieces in for now.

How to Assess

Use a puzzle that is new to your child when you assess. Assess as for FM.H.74, using a six-piece puzzle that gives clear clues as to where the pieces should go (for example a puzzle showing a figure).

How to Teach

All the points made in FM.H.74 apply here, except that you can expect to complete fewer puzzles in each session.

Your child needs to learn that some pieces will be easier to use as the starting pieces than others. If he cannot find a place to put a piece, encourage him to try another piece and come back later to the one causing difficulty. Remember to use a puzzle that you have not used for teaching when assessing again.

Playtime and Round-the-house Activities

As for FM.H.74.

Remembering and Extending

This skill is extended by the next skill in this sequence, FM.H.101. Maintain at this level with practice if you do not want to go straight on.

Some six-piece puzzles are quite difficult and will present your child with a challenge for some time to come. Be guided by how difficult *you* find each puzzle!

COMPLETES AN EIGHT-PIECE PUZZLE (UNSEEN)

FM.H.101

This is an extension of FM.H.100 and can be assessed and taught in the same way. Remember to use an unfamiliar puzzle when you assess.

Once your child has reached this level of skill with puzzles, you can turn your attention to the speed with which he completes them. Time your child as he completes a familiar puzzle, then set an egg-timer for a slightly shorter time. Encourage your child to finish the puzzle before the buzzer sounds. Aim for about three minutes for a familiar puzzle.

COMPLETES A FOUR-PIECE JIGSAW PUZZLE

FM.H.102

In a jigsaw puzzle, the entire picture is cut up into small pieces — unlike an interlocking puzzle (as we define it in FM.H.74), where the pieces are set into a board or tray.

Hence jigsaw puzzles provide fewer contextual clues as to what goes where. As you will know, if you enjoy doing jigsaw puzzles yourself, the most successful procedure is trial-and-error.

Four-piece jigsaw puzzles are very hard to find, but you can use larger puzzles, putting together the first few pieces yourself. Choose puzzles with large wooden pieces, rather than small cardboard ones.

Perhaps you know a handyperson who would enjoy making some puzzles for you.

How to Assess

Materials: A jigsaw puzzle with large pieces.
Method: Show your child the completed jigsaw puzzle, then divide it into pieces. Put the puzzle together, or help your child to do so, until four adjoining pieces remain (for example four pieces from the top right corner). Ask your child to complete the jigsaw.

Score *plus* if your child puts all four pieces together without your assistance.

How to Teach

Talk to your child about the picture before you start. Ask questions such as 'What's up the top?'

Teach him to identify corner pieces and then edge pieces.

Work through each piece in turn, talking about its shape and its place in the picture, or identify something that is needed to complete the jigsaw ('We need the chimney and a bit of roof') and let your child find the relevant piece.

Give lots of practice, with a range of puzzles.

Playtime and Round-the-house Activities

Giant floor puzzles are fun for a change.

Help your child to make his own jigsaw puzzles, by pasting a large picture onto some heavy cardboard and cutting it up with scissors. This is lots of fun with photographs of familiar people.

Old wallpaper samples with strong patterns can make interesting jigsaws too.

Remembering and Extending

Gradually increase the number of pieces that you give your child to work with. You can make the pieces smaller too.

BUILDS A BRIDGE IN IMITATION

FM.H.103

Like FM.H.75 this is an imitation activity using blocks. The problem is to create a structure the same as that demonstrated by the teacher.

This activity also requires fine balance, and some forward thinking.

How to Assess

Materials: Six blocks, about 3 cm across.

Method: Say: 'I'm going to build a bridge. Look, I put one block here, and one block here and a block on top.' Place your second block about 2 cm away from the first, and the third block on top, straddling the others.

Draw your child's attention to the gap in the bridge by pushing your finger or a pencil through the hole. Say 'Look, my train goes under the bridge'.

Leaving your bridge intact, give the remaining blocks to your child and say 'You build a bridge'. Give three tries.

Score *plus* if your child builds a bridge, as described, in two out of three tries.

How to Teach

The steps are similar to those used in FM.H.75 and the same basic approach is used to teach this skill.

1. *Adds the third block to complete a bridge.*
2. *Adds two blocks to the first block to complete a bridge, with verbal help and physical help.* At this and the following stage, emphasise leaving a gap between the first two blocks. Some children find it helpful to use a finger as a guide.
3. *Builds a bridge with verbal help only.*
4. *Builds a bridge in imitation, as in the main objective.* Your aim is that your child should watch and copy you, so teach as much as possible through demonstration. Give no more physical or verbal help than is absolutely necessary.

Playtime and Round-the-house Activities

Encourage bridge building when your child is playing with his blocks and cars. Bridges can be built with large blocks of different shapes. Perhaps you could build a huge one with cardboard cartons and let him wriggle through the hole.

Remembering and Extending

When your child has mastered this skill, the way is open for building more complex block structures. You can give him ideas as you play alongside him, and admire the ones he creates by himself.

PLACES FIVE BLOCKS IN SERIAL ORDER

FM.H.104

In this activity, the problem is to place five blocks or cylinders of different sizes in order of size.

How to Assess

Materials: Five blocks or cylinders of notably different size.

Method: Place the blocks in random order. Ask your child to make them go bigger and bigger. Demonstrate if necessary, but without describing what you are doing, and then return the blocks to a random order.

Score *plus* if your child places the blocks in order of size without help.

How to Teach

It's handy to have a little doll near by, who wants to go 'up the steps'. At the end of your child's try, see if the doll can go 'up, up, up'.

If an error is made, give your child the opportunity to sort it out by himself, before you step in to help him.

Use consistent verbal directions right from the beginning. You can teach your child to work from the littlest to the biggest or vice versa, but in the early stages, use the same approach each time. You want your child to learn a strategy for solving this problem.

Playtime and Round-the-house Activities

Make a 'family' out of cardboard cylinders. Cut lengths of cylinder to represent each member of your family, exaggerating differences of size, if necessary. If you have a small family you could include the pet or some friends. Draw a face on each cylinder and identifiable features. Ask your child 'Who's the biggest person in our family?' (or 'Who's the smallest?') and help him to line up the figures in order of size.

You can also play this game with dolls or Teddy Bears. Or you could use books of different sizes or empty shampoo bottles or lengths of garden hose or pieces of bread stick.

There are many commercially available toys which involve grading objects by size — some of these were described under FM.H.65 (puts together four nesting cups).

Remembering and Extending

Once your child has learned to arrange five objects in serial order, he can learn to arrange six or seven or . . .

MAKES A MECHANICAL TOY WORK, WITH NO DEMONSTRATION

FM.H.105

This is an extension of FM.H.76 (searches for the causal mechanism).

Assess in the same way, scoring *plus* if your child finds the mechanism and operates the toy.

Teach in the same way as FM.H.76.

REMEMBERING AND EXTENDING THIS SEQUENCE

Here are some problem-solving activities which are generally mastered at the 4–5-year-old level of development:

- Points to (or names) a part which is missing from a picture.
- Tells which object is missing when one of five is taken away.
- Completes a 10-piece puzzle in three minutes.
- Arranges pictures in order to tell story.

As well, you will find many extension activities listed under individual items in this sequence. By now, your child has acquired strategies for solving a range of different problems. The most important strategy is that of trying again if things don't work out the first time. You can extend his problem-solving skills by offering more challenging materials, but do give him plenty of time to practise with familiar toys and puzzles for the sake of the satisfaction it will bring him to complete tasks quickly and efficiently.

CHAPTER 9

FM.I: Matching and Sorting: Objects and Pictures

Matching means bringing together things that are the same. Matching is one of the most important ways in which children explore the world. They learn that things that are the same can be given the same name. They learn that things can be the same in some respects, but not in others, and in this way learn such crucial concepts as colour, shape and size. They learn to observe fine differences between similar objects and pictures — a skill that is vital to reading. When you teach your child to match, you are providing the basis for much further learning.

In this sequence, your child will learn to classify objects and pictures, by matching together those that are the same.

In the following sequence, FM.J, your child will learn to classify things according to the 'pre-academic' concepts of colour, shape, size and number, and will begin some prereading activities.

The first three skills in this sequence (FM.I) are taught first, and then the two sequences are taught in parallel.

While all the skills in this sequence, and many in FM.J, are mainly concerned with visual discrimination, always talk to your child about the objects or pictures he is matching. In this way you will be helping him to develop his language skills as well.

It is easy to find objects to match — just about anything will do. We have used teaspoons, pegs, cotton reels, small blocks, plugs, large screws and other hardware items, party favours from the novelty sections of supermarkets and all kinds of odds and ends! The only criterion is that you have at least two of each object.

Pictures for matching are a little harder to find. Nine-piece lotto games are readily available, but in the early stages, when pairs of pictures are required, we rely mostly on home-made materials. When large pictures are needed, you could buy two identical *Ladybird* picture books, remove the pictures and mount them on cardboard — perhaps with a cover of self-adhesive plastic. We find that these pictures have many uses other than matching. Another handy source of pictures is a game of Concentration or Memory or Snap.

In the early stages, some children find it easier to match when the objects or pictures are placed in separate dishes. Choose very plain dishes with low sides — pot-plant saucers work well.

Although this sequence is called Matching and Sorting there is only one sorting activity, at the end of the sequence. You will find many more sorting activities in Sequence FM.J. What is the difference between matching and sorting? In matching, the child is given the objects or pictures one by one and asked to put each one with something that is the same. In sorting, the child is given a pile of objects or pictures and directed to divide them into groups. Sorting is a self-directed activity. Although there is just the one sorting activity in this sequence, most of the earlier matching items can be adapted into sorting activities for extra practice and extension.

Below we list all the skills in this sequence.

18 months to 2 years
59. Matches identical objects (no choice).
60. Matches identical objects, choice of two.

2 to 3 years
77. Matches objects to pictures, choice of two.
78. Matches pictures, choice of two.
79. Matches pictures, choice of four.
80. Matches objects to pictures, choice of four.

3 to 4 years
106. Matches picture cards, choice of nine.
107. Sorts picture cards, choice of nine.

MATCHES IDENTICAL OBJECTS (NO CHOICE)

FM.I.59

This exercise introduces to the child the concept of putting an object with others that are the same. It also strengthens his understanding of the direction 'put' — he must put the object into the dish without taking others out.

How to Assess

Materials: Several identical small objects, such as pegs. A flat bowl or box.

Method: Put several pegs in the bowl and place it in front of your child. Give him a peg and say 'Put the peg with the pegs'.

Score *plus* if your child puts the peg into the bowl.

How to Teach

You will need several sets of identical objects, for example pegs, blocks, spoons.

Teach as much as possible through demonstration, giving a clear direction each time. If your child needs a little extra help, point to the bowl as you say 'Put', and/or hold his wrist so that his hand is positioned above the bowl.

If your child has difficulty releasing the object into the bowl, reassess him on FM.D.36 (puts an object into a bowl).

If your child wants to take objects out of the bowl, move it out of his reach, gain his attention, and give a clear direction — 'Put'.

Vary your materials as you teach this skill.

Playtime and Round-the-house Activities

Encourage your child to put pegs into a peg bag when you are at the clothes line, blocks into his block bucket at playtime, spoons into a container while you are drying the dishes, and so on. Always give a consistent direction — 'Put . . . with . . .'.

Remembering and Extending

When your child has mastered this skill you can move on to the next skill in this sequence.

MATCHES IDENTICAL OBJECTS, CHOICE OF TWO

FM.I.60

This skill provides the basis of all future matching and sorting work. Your child will use this skill to learn not only about objects, but about colour, shape, size, numbers, letters and words! It is therefore well worthwhile to ensure that your child has a firm grasp of this skill before moving on.

How to Assess

Materials: Two bowls containing two sets of objects, for example blue pegs in one, metal spoons in the other.

Method: Place the bowls in front of your child. Give him one object. Say 'Put . . . with . . .'.

Give three tries for each object, changing from one to the other in a random pattern. Change the position of the bowls at least once during the activity.

Score *plus* if your child matches like objects in two out of three tries for each object.

How to Teach

You will need a variety of sets of objects. In the early stages of teaching, ensure that the objects in each set are all the same colour (such as red blocks or yellow cotton reels). As your child progresses, you can introduce sets that contain a variety colours, though of course the shape must remain the same.

When your child puts an object in the correct bowl, reinforce enthusiastically, saying 'Good, you put . . . with . . .'.

When your child moves his hands towards the wrong bowl, pull the bowl out of his reach, and say 'Look hard — . . . goes with . . .'. If he succeeds in putting the object in the wrong bowl, say something like this: 'Oh dear. Does . . . go with . . .? NO. You put . . . with . . .'.

Vary your materials frequently during teaching, gradually introducing materials which contrast less clearly.

Playtime and Round-the-house Activities

You will find many pairs of objects around the house. Make a habit of pointing out their sameness. You could say: 'Look, here's a shoe and here's a shoe. Shoe with shoe. They're the SAME.'

Remembering and Extending

As well as continuing with this sequence, you can extend this skill by giving your child three different sets of objects to match, and then four. Once he is working on the 3-year-old skills, you can give him a pile of objects to sort, as an independent activity, for example the contents of the cutlery drawer.

MATCHES OBJECTS TO PICTURES, CHOICE OF TWO

FM.I.77

Now your child can begin to explore the connection between things he sees in pictures and things he sees in 'real life'. That picture in the book is a cow, and so are those big animals out in the paddock. This is a very important discovery, one which will help him to learn more from pictures.

How to Assess

Materials: Two clear pictures, about 10 cm square, of familiar objects. An object corresponding to each picture. For example, a picture of a cup and a cup from a child's tea-set; a picture of a dog and a small toy dog. *Ladybird* picture books are a good source of pictures.

Method: Put the pictures on the table in front of your child. Say 'Look, I can put the . . . on the . . .'. Demonstrate. Give the object to your child and say 'Put the . . . on the . . .'. Give two tries for each object, alternating them and changing the positions of the pictures halfway through.

Score *plus* if your child puts the objects on the corresponding picture in three out of the four tries; without physical or verbal help.

How to Teach

Follow the method described for FM.I.60, varying your materials as you teach.

As well as putting the objects on the pictures, your child can put the pictures on or with the objects.

Playtime and Round-the-house Activities

If your child has a favourite picture book, collect as many objects as you can find that correspond to pictures in the book. As you read the book together, you can produce the corresponding objects and point out that they are the same. As your child gets the idea you could show him two objects at a time and ask him which one goes with the picture.

As with FM.I.60 talk about the sameness between pictures and objects whenever opportunities occur.

Remembering and Extending

This skill will be directly extended by FM.I.80.

As well as continuing with this sequence, you can begin work on Sequence FM.J, which introduces the preacademic skill areas of colour, shape and size.

MATCHES PICTURES, CHOICE OF TWO

FM.I.78

Matching pictures with pictures requires fine visual discrimination. In this exercise you will start with two pairs of pictures, and in later items you will progress up to nine.

Begin with very clear pictures, 5 cm square or larger. Pictures that you draw yourself with black felt pen and colour brightly will work very well. Use tracing paper to get two the same. Or you can buy two copies of the same picture book and cut them up. The early *Ladybird* books are good for this.

How to Assess

Materials: Two sets of pictures, as described above.

Method: Put one picture from each set on the table. Say 'Look, I can put the . . . on the . . .'. Demonstrate. Give the picture to your child, and say 'Put the . . . on the . . .'. Give two tries for each picture, alternating them and changing the position of the pictures halfway through.

Score *plus* if your child matches the pictures with the identical pictures in three out of the four tries, without physical or verbal help.

How to Teach

Teach as for FM.I.60, using pictures instead of objects. Vary your materials during teaching.

If your child has difficulty positioning the pictures, try putting them in dishes.

For variety you could make a two-piece lotto board, in which two clear pictures are pasted or drawn onto a large piece of cardboard.

Playtime and Round-the-house Activities

If your pictures are fairly durable, give them to your child as free-play materials. He will enjoy looking at them, and when you are with him you can point out ones that are the same.

Identical pictures often recur in magazines — usually as part of advertisements. Collect such pairs of pictures and use them in a pasting activity. Choose a pair of pictures and paste one of each on a piece of paper. Give the other two to your child and help him to paste each one close to the one that is the same.

Remembering and Extending

When your child has achieved this skill you can move on to FM.I.79.

MATCHES PICTURES, CHOICE OF FOUR

FM.I.79

Assess as for FM.I.78, using four sets of pictures or a four-piece lotto board.

Teach as for FM.I.78, giving a choice of three pictures as an intermediate step if necessary.

Maintain with practice, using a variety of materials, until you are ready to begin teaching FM.I.106 (matches picture cards, choice of nine).

You could also try giving your child a pile of pictures, with two or more of each, to sort into matching groups. Encourage your child to sort independently and to let you know when he has finished. You will find more notes about sorting under FM.I.107.

MATCHES OBJECTS TO PICTURES, CHOICE OF FOUR

FM.I.80

Assess as for FM.I.77, using four pictures and four matching objects.

Teach as for FM.I.77, giving a choice of three objects or pictures as an intermediate step if necessary.

You can extend this activity by giving a choice of six. You can also present a sorting activity in which your child is given a pile of pictures and a pile of objects, and asked to pair them on his own, letting you know when he has finished.

MATCHES PICTURE CARDS, CHOICE OF NINE

FM.I.106

Once your child can match nine pictures, he will have reached an advanced level of visual discrimination. At Macquarie we use this item as one of the prerequisite skills for learning to discriminate and recognise words (yes, reading!).

You will find ready-made nine-piece lotto sets in educational toy shops. A lotto set has a range of pictures laid out on a base board, and sets of picture cards to match. Look for (or make) a lotto set which has clear pictures of familiar objects. More challenging lotto sets, which show similar pictures or silhouettes of objects, are useful for extension work.

How to Assess

Materials: A lotto board with nine pictures and nine matching cards.

Method: Place the lotto board on the table. Hold up the first card and say 'Put . . . on . . .'. Repeat for all cards. Remove each card after your child has matched it.

Score *plus* if your child places all nine cards on the matching picture.

How to Teach

You will need at least two different lotto boards. Most commercially available lottos have several to a set.

Many children benefit from working on six-piece lottos before moving on to nine-piece ones. Six-piece lottos are hard to find in the shops, so make your own, either by drawing yourself or by pasting down six cards from a game of Concentration and using the other half of each pair to match.

It is essential that your child looks closely at the picture card, and at the board, before he matches. If you can see that he is about to make an error, intercept him and say 'Look hard. This is a . . . Where's the . . .?'

If your child persists in making errors, direct him to point to the matching picture. Help him to keep his finger in place as he puts the picture card down.

Matching nine pictures takes quite a long time, but it is important that your child learns to concentrate throughout the activity. If he will currently match five pictures before losing concentration, require that he matches six. Gradually build up until he is matching all nine. It is important that you determine when the activity will end. Before you start, show your child all the pictures that you want him to match, and put them in a separate pile when you have finished.

Playtime and Round-the-house Activities

Let your child play freely with his lotto boards from time to time. Spend time looking at complex pictures with many parts, pointing out different features and asking your child to select familiar objects.

Remembering and Extending

In the next item in this sequence, your child will learn to sort the picture cards.

You can extend his skills by introducing more challenging lottos — the 'Bruna Lottino' series has silhouettes on the backs of the lotto boards and the child must match the picture cards to their silhouettes. Other lottos are available which show very similar pictures (such as photographs of animals) or abstract patterns. Or you could look for sets in which pictures of individual objects are placed on a single complex picture.

SORTS PICTURE CARDS, CHOICE OF NINE

FM.I.107

In matching exercises, the child is given the objects or pictures one by one to place with their matching pairs.

In sorting activities, the child is given all the objects or pictures to be matched at once, and when he has placed one, he must go on to place another without prompting. He himself must initiate all the 'turns' in the game.

Sorting activities are important in helping a child to learn to work independently, without the constant presence of an adult.

How to Assess

Materials: A lotto board with nine pictures and nine matching cards.

Method: Place the lotto board on the table and put all the cards in a pile to one side. Say 'Put the pictures on the same pictures'.

Move a short distance away from your child. Occasional encouraging smiles or words are fine, but do not give any direct instructions.

Score *plus* if your child completes the activity with at least eight of the nine pieces correctly placed.

How to Teach

It is important that your child knows that you will, in time, come back to look and admire.

Start by giving him just two cards to place. Say 'You put these on while I go and do such-and-such'. Praise him if he has done so; if not, repeat your direction more precisely — 'Put flower on flower and train on train' — and move away again.

Gradually build up the number of pieces you give him, and make your verbal reminders more general. 'Do some more' is a useful reminder. 'Have you finished yet?' can work well too.

If your child will soon start school, you could teach him a way to signal that he has finished, using words (such as 'finished') or gestures (such as a raised hand) according to his language ability.

Keep extending your child until he can put all the cards in position with no more than an encouraging smile or word, and can signal to you that it is time for you to look.

Playtime and Round-the-house Activities

Listen carefully to the number of directions you are giving your child during the day, and think about whether he really needs so much help and close attention. During activities that you know he can do, begin to move away, both physically and metaphorically, prompting him gently from a distance when needed. Try to convey to your child that you are confident that he will do just as well without your close attention as he does with it.

For practising sorting, all kinds of materials can be used. Any that you used to teach matching can be used now to encourage independent activity. You will find more ideas under Sequence FM.J, where matching and sorting skills are used to teach colour, shape and size.

Once your child has completed this sequence, he is ready to learn to match letters and words, as described in FM.J.117 and 118.

CHAPTER 10

FM.J: Matching, Sorting and Selecting: Preacademics

In this sequence, your child will begin to classify objects and pictures according to the concepts of colour, shape and size. One number activity is included, and at the end of the sequence you will find prereading activities in which letters and words are matched in a lotto game. These 'preacademic' concepts relate closely to much of the work done in the early years at school, but they are just as important to leisure activities and to a child's ability to communicate with others about shared experiences.

This sequence is usually started once the child has mastered the first three skills in Sequence FM.I: Matching and Sorting: Objects and Pictures. From that point, the two sequences, FM.I and FM.J, are taught in parallel.

Many of the skills in this sequence are taught using the Match-to-Sample game. We do not describe this game each time, but refer you to the general notes on page 2–31, Book 2, Chapter 3.

We will describe materials as we go; you will find that this is one of the easiest sequences for which to find a variety of suitable materials.

Below we list all the skills in this sequence.

2 to 3 years

81. Gives one object on cue.
82. Matches shapes, choice of three.
83. Matches colours, choice of two.
84. Matches colours, choice of two, four different colours.

3 to 4 years

108. Selects three shapes.
109. Matches colours, choice of four.
110. Matches the colour pattern of four blocks.
111. Sorts two sizes.
112. Sorts three shapes.
113. Sorts objects according to category.
114. Pairs common objects by function.
115. Selects colours, choice of four.
116. Sorts colours, choice of four.
117. Matches alphabet lotto, choice of six.
118. Matches word lotto, choice of four.

There are two general points to be made about this sequence of skills. Children always learn to match before they learn to select. But the position of sorting in this progression is less clear-cut. Sorting requires a different kind of skill; as well as a concept of colour, size or whatever, the child must be able to work independently — to persevere with a task without constant supervision. Some children are able to sort before they are able to select, while with other children, selecting comes before sorting. Assess your child on both selecting and sorting at the same time, where both are present within the sequence, and vary the order of the sequence to suit your child if necessary.

A second point is this. While most children find it easier to match and select shapes than to match and select colours, this is not always the case. Similarly, some children will be able to sort objects by category and function earlier than is shown above. Again, assess your child widely within the sequence before you begin teaching, and vary the order in which you introduce the items to suit your child's individual areas of strength.

GIVES ONE OBJECT ON CUE

FM.J.81

This exercise is different from the others in this sequence in that it involves no matching. It could equally well be included among the Receptive Language skills, but we place it here because it relates to the preacademic concept of number.

Giving or taking just one object is a useful skill for a child to know, as can be testified by any parent whose child likes to take whatever is offering by the handful.

How to Assess

Materials: Two dishes, each containing several identical objects. For example one dish of blue pegs and one dish of red blocks.

Method: Place the first dish in front of your child and put your hand near the dish. Say 'Give me one . . .'. If your child gives you one, pause to see if your child attempts to give you more before moving your hand away. Repeat with the second dish.

Score *plus* if your child gives you one object on both tries, without attempting to give you more than one.

How to Teach

This is not an easy skill to teach, as it can be hard for the child to see where he is going wrong in the early stages. After all, up to now you have been delighted whenever he has given you anything!

Teach as much as possible in natural situations. Instead of giving him one sultana, offer him the plate and guide him physically and verbally to take just one. Do this with biscuits, chips and so on.

In special teaching sessions, you can proceed as in the assessment, helping him to stop after he has given one object. Say: 'Look, I've got one. No more.' You might also use a hand signal, such as a stop sign, to remind him.

Take turns with your child — you be the giver sometimes. Say: 'I'll give you one. Any more? No, just one.'

Gradually reduce your physical and verbal reminders until he can follow the direction without help.

Playtime and Round-the-house Activities

As we have said, this skill is best taught in natural situations. As well as food items, you can practise giving one with blocks, pegs (at the clothes line) and spoons (when setting the table).

Remembering and Extending

This skill has so many practical uses that you will not find it hard to provide practice.

This is a good place for some general comments about teaching early number skills. Beyond this point, number is not directly covered in this manual — it comes into its own when children are working at the 4–5-year-old level. However, if you wish, and if your child has the necessary language skills, there is no reason why you can't start now to teach your child to count. Counting objects and saying number rhymes are, after all, natural things to do with a child.

Small children learn to count first by rote; they reel the numbers off, imitating their parents, without any real understanding of what they are doing. They learn that numbers are said whenever there is more than one of something. What educators call 'one-to-one correspondence' — the ability to say one number for each object being counted — comes much later.

The important point to remember is this. Rote counting is the foundation for all later number work, and it is vital that your child learns to rote count (that is, say the numbers) correctly. If you give him three things and he counts '1, 2, 3, 4, 5', don't worry — in time he will learn what counting is for. But if he says the numbers in the wrong order or leaves one out, take time to correct him right from the beginning. If he says to himself, over and over, '1, 2, 3, 5, 6', he will learn this pattern and it will be very hard for him to unlearn it again.

The solution is simple. Just make sure that he hears correct counting more often than he hears incorrect counting — from himself or anyone else. If he counts '1, 2, 3, 5, 6', step in and say (without recriminations) '1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6'. And then say it again!

If you would like more information about the Macquarie approach to teaching number, please refer to the ordering information in Book 1, Chapter 5.

MATCHES SHAPES, CHOICE OF THREE

FM.J.82

Children learn to recognise shapes in the same way as they learn to recognise colours and many other concepts — that is, first by matching them, and then by selecting them. Most children will, in time, name the shapes, but once they can select, they show that they know the names, even if they cannot yet say them.

This item is concerned with the first step in the process of learning shapes — matching. If you have a formboard (FM.H.67, 68, 69) your child will already be familiar with matching shapes.

Materials are easily made at home. Using stiff cardboard, cut out three of each shape — circles, squares and triangles. Make your shapes quite large. We have also cut shapes from vinyl and from wallpaper — or a handyperson might make you some wooden ones. Commercially available sets, called 'attribute blocks', have many useful applications (they come in different sizes as well) but their expense makes them a luxury.

How to Assess

Materials: Three triangles, three squares and three circles. Make sure that they are either all the same colour, or a range of different colours. Avoid having all squares blue, all the circles yellow and all the triangles red (for instance) or you won't know whether your child is matching by shape or colour. Three shallow dishes.

Method: Place the three dishes in front of your child, and place one shape in each dish. Hold up a circle. Say 'I'm putting the circle with the circle'. Do so. Now give your child another shape and say 'Put the . . . with the . . .'. Repeat for each remaining shape.

Score *plus* if your child matches all the remaining shapes correctly.

How to Teach

Use the same method as that described for FM.I.60 (matches identical objects). Refer also to the description of the Match-to-Sample game.

If your child has difficulty matching three shapes, work with just two as an intermediate step, and then introduce the third.

Playtime and Round-the-house Activities

Use all the opportunities that arise to talk about shapes in your environment. Encourage your child to look, and to trace out shapes with his fingers. Bring out your posting box and shape puzzles again. Cut sandwiches and cookies into different shapes, and encourage him to do this himself with cookie cutters and playdough. Cut paper into different shapes for artwork; you could help to paste shapes onto or near matching shapes that you have drawn on his paper.

Remembering and Extending

This skill is directly extended in FM.J.108, where your child will learn to select shapes. You can progress through the in-between steps in the Match-to-Sample game as you teach other skills from this sequence, or you can leave shapes aside for a little while, maintaining with occasional practice.

MATCHES COLOURS, CHOICE OF TWO

FM.J.83

As for shapes, matching is the first step in learning to recognise colours.

In this first colour item, your child scores *plus* if he can match any one pair of colours. It does not matter what these colours are — they might be blue and yellow, or black and red, or any combination at all. At Macquarie, we generally begin teaching the four basic colours — red, blue, green and yellow — and blue and yellow is the combination most frequently mastered first.

Assess as for the following item, FM.J.84, scoring *plus* once your child has successfully matched any two colours when presented together in at least four out of six tries.

Teach as for FM.J.84.

MATCHES COLOURS, CHOICE OF TWO, FOUR DIFFERENT COLOURS

FM.J.84

In this item, your child must be able to match four different colours when they are presented in choices of two, and must match each colour in at least two different combinations. That is, your child must be able to match red when it appears with blue, as well as with yellow, and must be able to do this for four different colours. Keep in mind that a percentage of boys are red–green colour blind, so you may need to be wary of this combination.

For teaching purposes we generally use the following sequence at Macquarie: blue and yellow, red and yellow, red and blue, green and blue, green and yellow, green and red.

How to Assess

Materials: Pairs of objects of each colour. It is helpful to have a small dish of each colour, into which matching objects can be placed. Brightly coloured plastic dishes can often be found in supermarkets. Objects can be pegs, pieces of Lego, plastic cars — anything that matches. Alternatively, you can use shapes cut out of brightly coloured cardboard or pieces of coloured felt. Make sure that all your pairs are identical in colour at this stage, especially with blues and greens which can vary greatly in shade.

Method: Start with any two colours you like, putting one member of each pair of objects on the table. Hand one of the matching objects to your child, saying 'Put . . . with . . .'. Give six tries, three for each colour. Then try another colour combination, until each colour has been tested at least twice. Spread this over a couple of assessment sessions if your child loses interest.

Score *plus* if your child matches four colours correctly in at least two out of three tries within at least two different combinations. (For example, yellow could score *plus* if it is matched correctly when contrasted with both red and blue.)

How to Teach

This skill is taught in the same way as FM.I.60 (matching objects) except that now your child is learning to match by colour. Follow the sequence of colour combinations suggested above, setting each one as your objective in turn. Vary your materials to maintain interest.

If you wish, you can teach one or two colour combinations and then turn your attention to a skill from another sequence, returning to colour matching a little later. If you do this, remember to give your child plenty of practice in colour matching — perhaps in play activities — so that he does not forget the skills he has learned.

Playtime and Round-the-house Activities

There are many ways in which colour matching can be practised outside special teaching sessions. Say you are concentrating on blue and yellow. You could put all your child's blue toys in one basket, and all his yellow ones in another and help him to match them at playtime. You could collect blue and yellow blocks for building blue and yellow towers. Try stretching a string across his blackboard, and guiding him to put blue pegs at one end, and yellow pegs at the other. Give him some paste, some blue and yellow paper, and cut-out shapes to match. When looking at books with your child, point out all the blue things on a page, and then all the yellow things. Let him find a yellow T-shirt to match his yellow shorts. Find yellow flowers in the garden, or blue socks in the washing basket. You will think of many more ideas yourself.

Remembering and Extending

In FM.J.109, your child will learn to match colours with a choice of four. You can move on to this skill now, or concentrate on other things for a while, maintaining your child's current skills with practice.

SELECTS THREE SHAPES

FM.J.108

This item directly extends the skill of matching shapes, learned in FM.J.82.

The procedure used to teach shape selection is the Match-to-Sample game.

Refer to the notes on materials under FM.J.82.

How to Assess

Materials: A circle, a square and a triangle, all the same colour.

Method: Put the shapes on the table. Say 'Point to the . . .' or 'Give me the . . .'. Give two tries for each shape, changing the position of the shapes from time to time.

Score *plus* if your child selects the correct shape in at least four of the six tries.

How to Teach

Before you begin teaching, you need to decide whether to teach all three shapes at once, or start with just two and include the third one later. Be guided by your child's performance during assessment, and by the ease with which he has progressed through earlier matching activities.

Work through the steps in the Match-to-Sample game, setting each step as your objective in turn. You may be able to skip a step here and there, or you may need to set some extra, in-between steps. Be guided by your child's progress, reassessing your child when you are in doubt.

Vary the materials from session to session, but continue to present shapes that are all the same colour at any one time. If your circle, square and triangle are all different colours, your child may learn that 'triangle' means 'yellow'!

Continue until your child can select the three shapes as described under How to Assess.

Playtime and Round-the-house Activities

Refer again to the activities described under FM.J.82, placing more emphasis now on asking your child to select shapes when possible.

Once your child is close to mastering this skill, a 'feely-bag' containing shapes is good fun — your child must select the shapes by feel alone. Remember to take turns to feel for shapes yourself, and describe what you feel: 'I can feel a shape with three points' or 'I've found something round.'

Remembering and Extending

If your child is talking, you can now encourage him to name the shapes — in imitation at first, and then in response to a question.

You can also introduce other shapes — rectangles, stars, diamonds and so on. Triangles can take many different forms, which can now be introduced.

MATCHES COLOURS, CHOICE OF FOUR

FM.J.109

Now your child is learning to match colours when a wider choice is offered.

How to Assess

Materials: As for FM.J.84.
Method: Put one item of each colour on the table, using dishes if you prefer. Hand your child an object that matches with one of them and say 'Put ... with ...'. Remove the matched piece when your child has finished. Give three tries for each colour.

Score *plus* if your child successfully matches each colour in at least two of the three tries.

How to Teach

You may choose to work on matching colours with a choice of three, as an intermediate step.

Use the same basic procedures for teaching matching, first described in FM.I.60, and also outlined in the description of the Match-to-Sample game.

Vary your materials to add interest to your teaching sessions.

Playtime and Round-the-house Activities

As well as continuing with the colour skills in this sequence, you could now teach your child to match a greater range of colours, including black, brown, purple, orange, pink and white. You could use one of the commercially available colour lotto games for variety and fun.

MATCHES THE COLOUR PATTERN OF FOUR BLOCKS

FM.J.110

This exercise offers a variation on earlier colour matching activities. It also introduces the skill of copying a pattern — much used in preschools and schools.

How to Assess

Materials: Eight blocks of two different colours — for example four blue and four yellow blocks.
Method: Take two blocks of each colour. Say: 'I'm going to make a pattern. Look.' Arrange your blocks in a row, touching, so that they make a pattern — for example blue, yellow, yellow, blue. Give the remaining blocks to your child, saying 'You make yours the same'. The child may make his own row on his side of the table or may place his blocks so that they touch yours. The important thing is that they are in the same order.

Give three tries, arranging your blocks differently each time. Do not give your child any help by naming the colours or by giving extra information as he works.

Score *plus* if your child matches your pattern in at least two of the three tries.

How to Teach

In the early stages of teaching this skill, you can give verbal and/or physical help for each step of the process.

Name the colours as you place your blocks: 'Look, I put blue, then yellow, then blue, then yellow.' Encouraging a left-to-right progression (from your child's point of view), ask: 'What comes first? What comes next?' Your child need not name the colours, but he must match one of his own to yours. Most children find it easier to learn this skill if they push their own blocks up to touch the teacher's blocks.

If an error is made, encourage your child to see the error for himself. Say 'Look, are they the same?' Direct him to remove the incorrect block and replace it himself.

As your child gets the idea, gradually reduce your assistance until he is working independently.

From time to time you could let him make a pattern and watch you match it.

Playtime and Round-the-house Activities

For variety, this exercise can be done using a peggy board, making a row of pegs instead of a row of blocks. Or use large building blocks, or Lego pieces on a baseboard. You could try using cut-out paper dolls.

Remembering and Extending

To extend this skill, you can make your patterns longer, and introduce more colours. You could also try making patterns with beads threaded on to a string — one string for you and one for your child. A more advanced activity is to make a pattern that repeats itself (for example red, green, blue, red, green, blue) and ask your child to continue the pattern along the same line.

SORTS TWO SIZES

FM.J.111

In the first sorting activity of this sequence, the child is asked to sort objects into just two groups — 'big' and 'little'.

All kinds of materials can be used — big and little spoons, plugs, circles, dolls — anything that you can collect in two distinct sizes.

How to Assess

Materials: A set of eight objects of the same shape, but of two distinct sizes. Two dishes.

Method: Put the dishes on the table, with the objects in a pile to one side. Say: 'Look, I've got big ones and little ones. I'm going to put all the big ones together and all the little ones together.' Do so. Then say 'You put the big ones together and the little ones together'. Move a short distance away, giving no more help than an occasional encouraging word or smile.

Score *plus* if your child correctly sorts all eight objects.

How to Teach

It is important that your child knows that you will come back to admire what he has done when he has finished.

Start by sorting the first few objects with your child and then saying 'You finish these while I go and do such-and-such'.

Return promptly and praise him if he has finished the task. If he has not finished, repeat your directions more precisely — 'Put big with big and little with little'. Move away again. If he still has not completed the activity, finish it with him, and start again from the beginning, leaving him to finish the last few items.

Gradually build up the number of objects you require him to sort by himself, and make your verbal reminders more general, saying 'Do some more' or 'Have you finished yet?'

Encourage him to call you when he has finished, or if he is not talking, to raise his hand.

Keep extending your child until he can put all the cards in position with no more than an encouraging word or smile, and can signal to you that it is time for you to look.

Playtime and Round-the-house Activities

See the notes under this heading in FM.I.107 (sorting picture cards). Use a variety of materials to help your child maintain interest.

Remembering and Extending

You can make this activity more challenging by making the objects closer in size, introducing a 'middle size' category as well as 'big' and 'little', and asking your child to sort into piles, rather than dishes. This way your child has no clues about the number of groups he should identify.

SORTS THREE SHAPES

FM.J.112

Here is another sorting activity, this one involving shapes. Start with circles, squares and triangles, using materials similar to those used in FM.J.82 and 108.

How to Assess

Materials: Three dishes, all the same colour (white or neutral dishes are best). Three circles, three squares and three triangles. They may include a variety of colours, but if you have all the circles red, all the squares blue and all the triangles yellow, you will not know if your child has sorted by shape or by colour.

Method: Place the dishes on the table, with the shapes in a pile to one side. Demonstrate the activity, saying 'Look, I'm putting all the circles in this dish, and all the squares in this dish, and all the triangles in this dish'. Remove all the shapes from the dishes, and direct your child to sort the shapes. Move a short distance away from your child while he does the activity, giving no more help than the occasional encouraging word or smile.

Score *plus* if your child correctly sorts all nine shapes.

How to Teach

Teach as for FM.I.107. In the early stages, keep all nine shapes the same colour. When your child can do this, introduce some colour variety, ensuring that your child continues to sort by shape rather than by colour.

Playtime and Round-the-house Activities

All kinds of objects can be sorted like this. A visit to the hardware shop will yield large washers, screws, nuts and bolts, plugs and brackets — all kinds of goodies that are fun for sorting. An older child's construction toy will also provide scope. You can also use drawn shapes on squares of cardboard.

Remembering and Extending

You can make this activity more challenging by:

- Varying the shapes you present, including diamonds, rectangles and so on.
- Increasing the number of groups to be sorted.
- Asking your child to sort into piles rather than dishes, as in FM.J.111.
- Varying the sizes within each group of shapes, so that you have circles of different sizes, squares of different sizes and so on.

SORTS OBJECTS ACCORDING TO CATEGORY

FM.J.113

In the Receptive Language Sequences the child learns to select objects on the basis of category to which they belong. In this item, the child uses his concept of categories, or groups of objects that relate to each other, in an independent sorting activity.

This item serves two purposes — it strengthens the child's ability to place things in categories, and it extends his sorting skills.

Before assessing and teaching this item, refer to RL.C.71 to 74. If your child has not scored *plus* on these items, teach them first, and then use this sorting item as an extension activity.

How to Assess

Materials: Three dishes and three sets of objects, with five in each set. Each set should represent a distinct category, such as toys, food, clothes, furniture or animals. For instance, you could have five small plastic food items, five pieces of dolls' clothing and five pieces of dolls' house furniture.
Method: Place the dishes on the table with the objects mixed together in a pile to one side. Demonstrate sorting the objects, saying 'Look, I'm putting all the clothes together', and so on. Remove the objects from the dishes, and ask your child to sort them.

Score *plus* if your child sorts all the objects correctly without any help.

How to Teach

If you have not already done so, begin teaching as in RL.C.71 to 74.

Once your child can point to all members of a group when you ask him to, present the sorting activity described below. Move away and allow your child to complete the activity independently, as in other sorting items in this sequence.

Playtime and Round-the-house Activities

Perhaps your child could sort the clothes that have come in off the line, or help you to sort the shopping into fruit, vegetables, cans and so on. Encourage him to sort out his belongings at tidying-up time.

Remembering and Extending

Refer again to the notes on RL.C.71 to 74.

Other categories that you could talk about and include in sorting activities are 'vehicles' and 'tools' and 'cultery'. Many objects are categorised by their use or function, such as 'things we wash up with' and 'things we sew with' and 'things we cook in'. This notion of function is explored more fully in the next item in this sequence.

PAIRS COMMON OBJECTS BY FUNCTION

FM.J.114

Identifying objects that go together, or are combined for the same purpose or function, is a common preschool and school activity.

Although there are usually only two items in a group, this should be seen as a sorting activity, and the child should be allowed to complete it as independently as possible.

How to Assess

Materials: Five pairs of objects that belong together, such as key and lock, sock and shoe, pencil and paper, soap and flannel, toothbrush and toothpaste.
Method: Place the 10 objects randomly on the table. Pick up one pair and say 'Look, these go together'. Separate them again, and direct your child to find all the things that go together.

Score *plus* if your child correctly pairs six of the 10 objects without any help or further directions.

How to Teach

Start with just two pairs of objects, and help your child to pair them by describing the purpose for which they are used. For example, you might ask 'I'm going to clean my teeth. What do I need?' If only one object is offered, say 'Yes, I need the toothbrush. What else do I need?' Repeat for the other pair.

Build up to three pairs, then four pairs, then five.

Vary the pairs of objects that you use — you could include a large needle and some cotton, a hammer and a nail, a dish-mop and a rubber glove, a brush and a comb, and so on.

When your child can pair five objects when you describe the function, as above, hold up one member of each pair and say 'What goes with this?' Only describe the function if an error is made.

Finally, ask your child to pair the objects without any help, as described under How to Assess.

Playtime and Round-the-house Activities

Practise this skill as much as possible in natural situations, by asking your child to find all the things he needs to clean his teeth, take to bed with him, draw a picture, go out in the rain and so on.

Remembering and Extending

You can extend this skill by increasing the number of objects you give your child to put into pairs. You can also present groups of three, such as pencil, paper and rubber, and needle, cotton and thimble.

As a preparation for school activities, make worksheets with simple drawings of objects scattered randomly on the page, and ask your child to draw lines between the things that to together. You might find some preschool activity books offering this kind of activity in a well-stocked newsagency.

SELECTS COLOURS, CHOICE OF FOUR

FM.J.115

By now your child can match colours with ease, and it is time for him to learn to recognise the names of the colours. Even if he cannot say the names himself, he can show that he recognises them by selecting the colours as you name them.

As with shapes, the steps between matching and selecting colours can be achieved through the Match-to-Sample game. You will be able to use the same materials that you used for colour matching, adding more for variety if needed. When you are matching to sample, you can use sample cards of each colour — these can then be used with a variety of different objects.

How to Assess

Materials: Four sets of four objects, different colours in each set. For example, four blocks (red, blue, green and yellow), four cars, four pegs, four ribbons.

Method: Place one set of four objects on the table — for example four blocks. Say 'Point to . . .' or 'Give me . . .'. Repeat for all colours. Place another set of coloured objects on the table, and continue until each colour has been tested four times.

Score *plus* if your child selects each colour correctly in at least three out of four tries.

How to Teach

Refer to the instructions for the Match-to-Sample game.

Before you begin teaching, you will need to decide whether to teach all four colours at once, or to start with just two, introducing the others once the first two have been learned. If your child already knows one or more of the colours, you might start with four.

At Macquarie we have usually found it necessary to start with just two and blue and yellow are usually selected. If a child learns blue and yellow with ease, the teachers at Macquarie would then introduce a third colour (usually red) and then finally a fourth colour. When blue and yellow are learned more slowly, children continue to work with combinations of two colours until all four colours have been learned in this way. The colours are then presented in groups of three, and finally in a group of four.

Trust your own judgment about the approach that will best suit your child. Keep a record of your child's progress to help you make changes when they are needed.

Playtime and Round-the-house Activities

While you are teaching colour selection in this structured way, you can use all sorts of informal occasions to strengthen your child's colour recognition. Books, toys and household objects provide a host of opportunities for saying 'Show me the . . . one'. While your child is working with a sample, you might keep your sample cards handy so that you can give your child that extra help.

You might also like to plan some special games for colour selection practice. Find four plastic cups of different colours, or paste coloured circles to the bottoms of paper cups. Place a sultana or other small treat under one cup. Tell your child that 'The sultana is under the yellow cup'. If he reaches for the wrong cup, correct him by showing the sample card. There are many ways of playing this hide-and-seek game; you will find variations to suit your toys and materials. These games can also be played with a choice of two or three colours of course.

Remembering and Extending

When your child can select red, blue, green and yellow, you can begin to introduce other colours, such as black, white, orange, pink and purple. Some children, once they have grasped the basic colours, will go on to learn extra colours without any structured teaching — especially as by now you will have learned to talk about colours naturally with your child. Other children need special help to learn each one.

If your child is talking, he should now be encouraged to name the colours, first in imitation, and then in response to a question. If your child is already talking in phrases, encourage him to pair the colour names with other words, such as 'blue sock' or 'yellow chicken'.

SORTS COLOURS, CHOICE OF FOUR

FM.J.116

As we said at the beginning of this sequence, your child may be able to sort colours before he can select them, so it is a good idea to assess this item even if your child has not yet scored *plus* on FM.J.115.

How to Assess

Materials: Four coloured dishes and 12 coloured objects, three of each colour.

Method: Place the dishes on the table, with the coloured objects in a pile to one side. Have a few turns at placing objects yourself, to demonstrate the activity. Tell your child what you are doing: 'Look, I'm putting blue with blue, and red with red, and . . .' Then say 'You do that', and move a short distance away. You can encourage your child with smiles from time to time, but do not give any extra information or help.

Score *plus* if your child completes the sorting activity, placing at least 11 of the 12 objects correctly.

How to Teach

Start by giving your child only a few objects to sort at a time. Assure him that you will come back very soon to look. Praise him warmly if he has completed the task you set him; if not, repeat your directions and move away again.

Make your directions (after the first one) as general and brief as possible. 'Do some more' or 'Have you finished yet?' are good reminders, without giving undue attention for tarrying.

Gradually increase the number of objects you give your child.

If your child will soon start school, you could teach him a way to signal that he has finished, using words or gestures depending on his language ability.

Playtime and Round-the-house Activities

Colour sorting can and should be practised with a range of materials in different places. Paste coloured shapes on boxes or buckets and let your child sort his large toys by colour. Let him sort the washing by colour (though this may mean some resorting for you afterwards!). Perhaps he could sort out the flowers you are going to arrange, or his crayons, or the pieces of paper and fabric on his pasting tray.

Remembering and Extending

Once your child has mastered sorting four colours, you could increase the number of colours or introduce some different ones.

A harder activity is to sort the colours without providing coloured dishes or boxes as a guide.

MATCHES ALPHABET LOTTO, CHOICE OF SIX

FM.J.117

While the ability to see the difference between letter shapes is necessary for reading, this is not really a reading skill. It is really an advanced form of picture matching, and your child should master FM.I.106 (matches picture cards, choice of nine) before working with alphabet lottos. Here, the 'pictures' are not only quite similar, but they have no meaning for the child. The child cannot think 'Ah yes, that's a hat. I'll look for another hat'. He must rely on the visual stimuli of shape and line alone to make the match.

While this is not in itself reading, it does help to prepare the child to read. It teaches the child to see similarities and differences between letters, and it helps him to learn that letters have names. If your child can do this exercise, it is highly probable that he will be able to learn to read.

Because the squiggles on the paper have no meaning for your child, he may tire of it if you work on it intensively for long periods of time. While you are teaching this skill, continue to use picture lottos as well — especially the more challenging ones which require him to look hard.

How to Assess

Materials: Home-made lotto board with six large (about 2 cm), distinct *lower case* alphabet letters, for example m, s, a, t, p and k. Six matching cards.

Method: Place the lotto board on the table. Hold up the first card, and say 'Put ... on ...'. Repeat for all letters. You may remove each card after your child has matched it.

Score *plus* if your child matches all six alphabet letters correctly.

How to Teach

Teach as for FM.I.106 (matches picture cards, choice of nine). If your child has difficulty recognising the smiliarities, help him to trace over the letter shapes with his finger. If progress is not made after three teaching sessions, return to FM.I.106 using lottos with highly stylised or abstract pictures, patterns or geometric shapes which provide a little more contrast than the alphabet letters.

Playtime and Round-the-house Activities

You can cut letters from magazines or newspapers for matching activities — perhaps using paste to group them together. An alphabet picture book in which each letter is printed more than once can be used for pointing out similarities. Helping your child to trace letters with his fingers, even where no matching is involved, may increase his awareness of fine differences in shape.

Remembering and Extending

If your child can draw a controlled line between two points, he may enjoy matching letters on a worksheet. Draw some letters down one side of a page (try three, to start with) and draw the same letters down the other side in a different order. Your child can then draw lines between the letters that are the same.

MATCHES WORD LOTTO, CHOICE OF FOUR

FM.J.118

This skill is a direct prerequisite for learning to read, but at this stage it does not matter if your child cannot remember what the words say. The primary purpose of the activity is to extend the child's matching ability.

How to Assess

Materials: A home-made lotto board with four clearly written words. The words should look very unlike each other in size and shape — for example elephant, ball, monkey, go — as it is the whole shape of the printed word which the child looks for.

Method: As for FM.J.117, using words.

Score *plus* if your child matches all four words correctly.

How to Teach

You can teach this in just the same way as you have taught the previous lotto matching skill.

Your child may be more interested if you use words that mean something to him. Even though your purpose is not to teach your child to read the words, you can choose words which will be useful to him if he does learn to read them. You could begin with his name.

When your child has learned to match one set of words, repeat the activity with a new set. To have mastered this task, your child should be able to match any set of four, distinctly different words.

Playtime and Round-the-house Activities

Sets of matching words are not easy to come by round-the-house, so this skill is hard to practise outside the time set aside for it. But this is a good time to begin drawing your child's attention to words and their function. You can begin pointing out key words as you read favourite stories, showing him the names on packages when shopping, reading the signs you encounter on the street and, most important of all, showing your child his name on his possessions and artwork.

REMEMBERING AND EXTENDING THIS SEQUENCE

If your child has mastered word-matching and enjoyed it, you might well feel interested in going on to 'real' reading.

At Macquarie, children are started on reading programs if they have scored *plus* on FM.J.118 and there are no more pressing priorities.

Although it is highly desirable for children with disabilities to learn to read, if a child has a marked delay in a certain area, time is devoted to strengthening that weakness before reading is begun. It is not that such weaknesses would necessarily prevent your child from learning to read — otherwise, how would severely physically disabled people ever learn? It is simply a matter of priorities, of delaying a new program until good progress is being made in all areas of a child's existing program.

Having made these reservations, we believe it is worth pointing out that all the children with Down's Syndrome who have passed through the Macquarie Program have learned to read, to varying degrees. We have found that reading is relatively easy for these children to learn, provided that it is taught carefully and is continually related to things the children know and understand. Many of the children who have gone on to normal schools have remained in the top reading groups in their classes throughout their early years at school — a great source of satisfaction and pride for them and their parents. These children have also found in reading a valuable source of leisure-time enjoyment which will stay with them throughout their lives.

The reading program developed at Macquarie uses the 'sight word' approach. Children learn to read whole words, and then words combined into phrases and sentences. Phonics (or 'sounding out') is introduced only after the children have learned 50–80 sight words and have a good understanding of what reading is all about. In the early stages of reading, each child has his own, individually selected vocabulary, drawn from the names of people and objects important to the child, and actions which he uses himself. Reading is seen as part of the child's overall language development — both receptive and expressive.

Small Steps is an Early Intervention Program for young children with developmental delays. The kit consists of eight books, and an optional videotape program.

Book 1: Introduction to Small Steps

This introductory book presents the background to Small Steps, and suggests ways in which it can be used.

Book 2: Your Child's Program

This book explains how to select goals for the individual child, and how to help the child achieve these goals in the context of family life.

Book 3: Communication Skills

This book is concerned with language learning, at both the preverbal and verbal levels. Language is seen in the context of social interaction, and skills are taught through play and 'everyday' activities.

Book 4: Gross Motor Skills

This book presents the skills which involve the large muscles of the body. These enable a child to sit, crawl, walk, climb, catch a ball and so on. It has been prepared by physiotherapists experienced with young children with disabilities.

Book 5: Fine Motor Skills

Fine Motor skills use the small muscles of the hand and eye. They range from the baby's first grasp of the parent's finger to complex skills such as drawing and cutting. Also included are problem-solving skills and the development of concepts such as colour, shape and size.

Book 6: Receptive Language Skills

Receptive Language skills involve the understanding of the language of others. They enable a child to attend to what others are saying, to follow directions and, most importantly, to use language him or herself.

Book 7: Personal and Social Skills

In this book we look at skills that help children to relate to others, to play and to achieve independence in eating, toileting, dressing and grooming.

Book 8: Developmental Skills Inventory

The D.S.I. draws together the individual parts of Small Steps. It is a series of checklists used for assessing the child and as a guide for setting objectives.

SMALL STEPS

AN EARLY INTERVENTION PROGRAM FOR CHILDREN WITH DEVELOPMENTAL DELAYS

Book 6 Receptive Language Skills

Moira Pieterse and Robin Treloar
with Sue Cairns

Macquarie University Sydney

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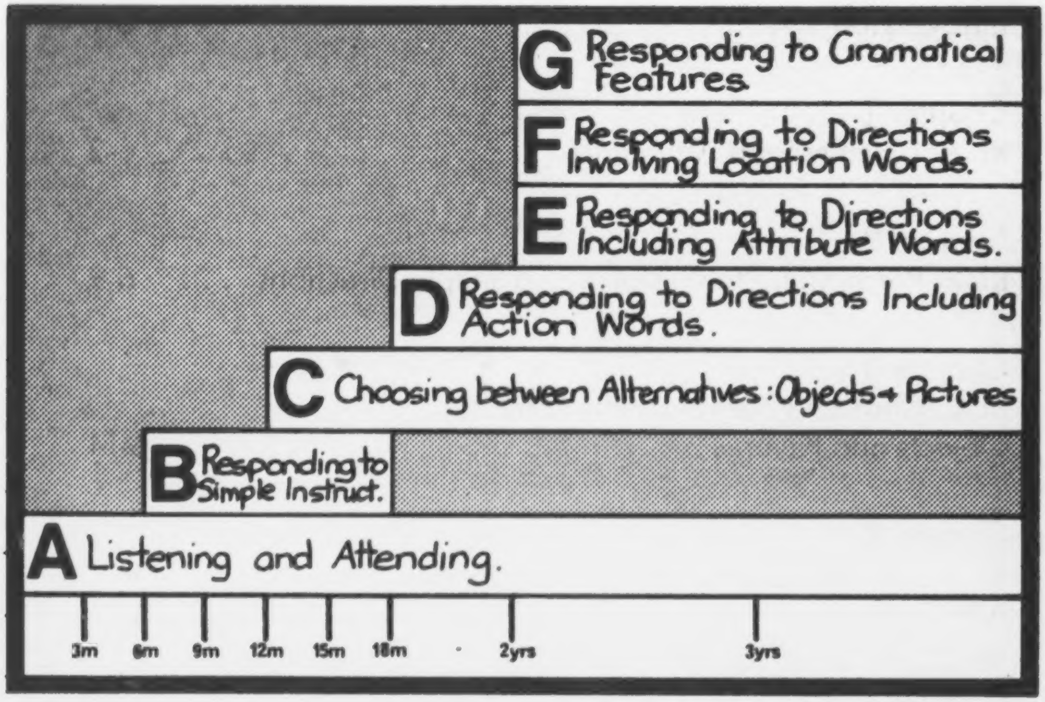
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D Responding to Directions Including Action Words.
C Choosing between Alternatives: Objects + Pictures
B Responding to Simple Instruct.
A Listening and Attending.
3m
6m
9m
12m
15m
18m
2yrs
3yrs

Introduction

Receptive Language skills are those used in understanding the communications of others.

We use these skills when we follow directions, and when we take our turn appropriately in conversations. Our Receptive Language skills also enable us to learn by listening to what others say.

The sequences in this program are:

RL.A:	Listening and Attending
RL.B:	Responding to Gestures and Simple Directions
RL.C:	Choosing Between Alternatives: Objects and Pictures
RL.D:	Responding to Directions Involving Action Words
RL.E:	Responding to Directions Involving Attribute Words
RL.F:	Responding to Directions Involving Location Words
RL.G:	Responding to Grammatical Features

What are the main points to remember about teaching Receptive Language skills? Receptive Language should be seen as part of the child's overall communication program. A child must understand the meanings of words and gestures before she can use them effectively. When you select gestures, words and phrases to use in your Receptive Language exercises, keep in mind the things she will want or need to communicate about, now or in the future. Attending is vital to all Receptive Language skills. Basic attending skills are taught in Sequence RL.A, but as your child moves on to other sequences, continue to ensure that she is looking at you, and listening, before you give each direction. This applies to informal round-the-house teaching as well as to structured sessions. Once you have your child's attention, speak to her clearly, and as simply as possible. Avoid 'cluttering' the directions you give her with large amounts of unnecessary chat (save up your chat for other times!). Of course, in the long term, you want your child to be able to understand what you say even when she is racing around in a room full of people! But to do this, she will first need to respond to what you say when distractions are minimal, *your* language is clear and her attention is firmly on *you*.

Who might need specialised assistance? Adaptations may be needed to the activities within these sequences if a child has visual, auditory or motor impairment. A specialist will help you to identify the underlying purposes of the activities and help your child reach equivalent goals.

CHAPTER 1

RL.A: Listening and Attending

The skills in this sequence are basic to all further learning. Once a child can look at and listen to other people, she will be able to learn from them. Deaf and/or blind children must learn alternative responses, but they too must learn to attend before other learning can follow.

When new babies and families enter the Macquarie Program, the first four skills in this sequence provide the starting point. These skills require no special teaching techniques — rather, parents are shown how their natural caring responses to their child will allow these skills to develop. Indeed, for most of the skills in this sequence we do not distinguish between 'teaching' and practising in play or round-the-house situations. Teaching attending skills can be involved in almost everything you do with your child.

You will find some overlapping between this sequence and the early Personal and Social skills described in Sequence PS.A. Especially in young babies, attending and socialising are closely bound together. Once your child is maintaining eye contact, an awareness of how children develop expressive language, or communication, skills will help you to make the most of your time with your child, and we refer you to Book 3, Chapters 1 and 2.

Most of the skills in this sequence are mastered in the first 12 months of normal development. You will find just one skill each for the second, third and fourth years, all of which relate to the child's ability to attend and respond to a story.

Below we list all the skills in this sequence.

0 to 3 months

1. Responds to sound with a startle or change in behaviour.
2. Responds to voice with a startle or change in behaviour.
3. Regards a face momentarily.
4. Maintains facial contact (watches the speaker's eyes and mouth.
5. Attends to surroundings by looking from one object to another.

3 to 6 months

6. Searches for sound with eyes.
7. Turns to sound (localises with eyes and head).
8. Turns to voice (localises with eyes and head).

6 to 9 months

9. Sits still in a chair and attends to a person or object.
10. Looks at pictures or objects for two minutes with an adult.
11. Changes facial expression in response to friendly or angry voices.

9 to 12 months

14. Listens to one person talk in a noisy environment.

18 months to 2 years

37. Listens to a complete short story.

2 to 3 years

64. Attends to a story for 10 minutes, one to one.

3 to 4 years

91. Answers simple questions, verbally or by pointing, during a story.

RESPONDS TO SOUND WITH A STARTLE OR CHANGE IN BEHAVIOUR

RL.A.1

This is a developmental milestone, used in most assessments to determine whether a certain level of development has been reached. It usually requires no special teaching. If a child continues beyond the first few weeks of life to show no response at all to sound, professional evaluation should be sought.

While there is no need for special teaching, it is a good idea to make a habit, right from the beginning, of introducing your child to different sounds — not (except for assessment purposes) to startle her, but to gently increase her awareness of the sounds around her.

How to Assess
Materials: A bell, or a loud rattle, with a medium to low pitch.
Method: When your child is fully awake and lying on her back, shake the bell or rattle near by but out of her sight. You may give several tries.

Your child may indicate awareness of the sound by blinking her eyes or by stiffening her body slightly, or by changing her body movements. She may start to cry, or if she was crying to start with, she may stop crying.

You can also assess this item by watching your child closely when the phone rings or the door bangs.

Score *plus* if your child shows her awareness of the sound in any of the ways described above.

RESPONDS TO VOICE WITH A STARTLE OR CHANGE IN BEHAVIOUR

RL.A.2

Responding to voice usually comes slightly later than responding to sound, though this is by no means always so.

Again, special teaching is not usually required. But as a general principle, it is most important to talk to your child, right from the time she is born. To some parents this comes naturally; others find it harder, especially in the early weeks before the baby begins to smile and 'talk' back. If you find it hard, try 'thinking aloud' to your baby or describing what you are doing as you go about your daily activities. Your baby will soon show you how much she loves to listen.

How to Assess
Method: Choose a time when your baby is lying on her back, and all has been quiet for a few moments. Call her name, first from one side, then from the other.

Watch for changes in behaviour described under RL.A.1.

Score *plus* if your child responds to your voice with a startle or change in behaviour.

REGARDS A FACE MOMENTARILY

RL.A.3

You will find this very same item in the Personal and Social Sequences, at PS.A.2. We include it in both checklists because giving attention to the face is so important to both Personal and Social and Receptive Language development. Indeed, development in these two areas is closely interconnected throughout the first year of life — and beyond.

Looking at the face is the first step in establishing eye contact — so crucial to socialising, attending and learning. As we note under PS.A.2, talking and smiling to your child are the best ways to encourage her to look at you, and this can begin from the moment of birth.

How to Assess
Method: Talk and smile to your child.

Score *plus* if your child watches your face for one or two seconds. She need not look directly into your eyes to score on this item.

MAINTAINS FACIAL CONTACT (WATCHES THE SPEAKER'S EYES AND MOUTH)

RL.A.4

Now the child will not only seek out your face, but continue to look into your eyes and at your mouth as you talk to her. You can encourage this by rewarding her early, fleeting eye contact with smiles and more talking. It is important at this stage to give your child plenty of time to find you. She will probably lose and find eye contact with you several times during a conversation.

How to Assess
Method: As for RL.A.3, but continue talking and encouraging her to look.

Score *plus* if your child looks at your mouth and eyes continuously for five seconds or more.

ATTENDS TO SURROUNDINGS BY LOOKING FROM ONE OBJECT TO ANOTHER

RL.A.5

You will remain the most interesting 'thing' to look at as far as your child is concerned. But as she grows you will notice that she is paying more attention to other things around her as well. Her early, seemingly unfocused stare will alternate with periods where she is clearly looking from one object to another — first at the window, perhaps, and then at the mobile above her bed.

Your child won't look about her in a purposeful way all the time, so watch her at her most alert and wakeful times of days when you assess this skill.

How to Assess

Method: Hold your child in a semi-propped position, or watch her when she is supported in her baby chair.

Score *plus* if your child looks from one object to another in the room — for instance, from a bright picture to the light, or from a mobile to your face.

How to Teach

Provide coloured things for your child to look at, and experiment with different distances. Begin with about a 30 cm distance from her eyes.

Things which make a pleasant sound such as windchimes are helpful, as are things which move, such as mobiles or curtains blowing in the breeze.

Vary the pictures and mobiles in your child's room to encourage her interest. This can be done with little expense, using magazine pictures or posters borrowed from a toy library, and mobiles improvised from balloons, bright ribbon and cardboard cut-outs. If you have an older child, he or she will enjoy helping you to decorate the baby's surroundings.

SEARCHES FOR SOUND WITH EYES

RL.A.6

Your child's earliest response to sudden or loud noises will be a startled response, as described in RL.A.1. At about the three months' level of development, she will begin to seek out the source of the sound, by looking about her. In time she will able to quickly and accurately locate the source of the sound, but in this item we are concerned with her attempts to find it, whether they are successful or not.

How to Assess

Materials: A small bell or rattle.

Method: While your child is lying on her back, shake the bell or rattle to one side of her, so that she cannot see it.

Score *plus* if your child moves her eyes (she may also move her head) when hearing the bell or rattle. She need not necessarily locate the object.

How to Teach

Although we talk about bells and rattles above, voices are just as important! Make a habit of speaking to your child — perhaps calling her name — before you come into her line of vision — for instance, as you approach her cot to pick her up. Observe her to see whether she is looking around for you.

As well, use the exercise described under How to Assess above. If she does not search for the rattle or bell, bring it into her line of vision, encourage her to watch it as you shake it and then move it away again.

Let all her searches be successful, by making sure that she does find the noisy object, or the person speaking, in the end.

Teaching this skill can merge into teaching the next skills in this sequence, so read about them now.

TURNS TO SOUND (LOCALISES WITH EYES AND HEAD)

RL.A.7

TURNS TO VOICE (LOCALISES WITH EYES AND HEAD)

RL.A.8

These skills directly extend RL.A.6, where the child searched for the source of a sound, without necessarily finding it.

Now the young child becomes more purposeful and accurate in locating the source of a voice or sound. Provided her head is well supported, she will turn towards the source, even if it is out of her line of vision.

By now most babies find voices more interesting than other sounds, and may turn to voices before they turn to rattles or bells. The order in which your child acquires these skills does not matter — you can work on both at the same time.

How to Assess

Assess as in RL.A.6, using both your voice and a bell or rattle, in any order.

Score *plus* for RL.A.7 if your child turns her eyes and head and finds the bell or rattle.

Score *plus* for RL.A.8 if your child turns her eyes and head and finds the person who has spoken to her.

How to Teach

If your baby does not turn towards you, place your hand on the far side of her head and gently turn her face towards you, calling her name all the time. When she finds you, reward her with big smiles and congratulations.

Try using an even lighter touch the next time you help her. In time you will sense that she is trying to move her head by herself. Help her only as much as she needs, and no more.

Many children find it easier to turn to one side than to the other, and need extra practice on the weaker side.

Follow the same procedure with rattles and bells.

Experiment with other noises as well. You could scrunch up some cellophane or squeeze a squeaky toy or rattle your keys — try whatever comes to hand.

Remembering and Extending

Watch for signs that your child is responding to incidental noises in her environment — footsteps coming up the hall or a ringing telephone or the bark of your neighbour's dog or adult conversation on the far side of the room. You can encourage her interest in such events by talking to her about them. Although she won't understand your words yet, she will develop a sense that you are sharing in the event with her, and that this sharing is marked by talking.

SITS STILL IN A CHAIR AND ATTENDS TO A PERSON OR OBJECT

RL.A.9

Once your child has this skill, you will be able to show her, and teach her, all kinds of things. Not only will she look at you, but she will look with you at objects that you show her. This forms the basis for playing together and for talking together.

How to Assess

Materials: Have ready some toys, objects and pictures to show your child.

Method: Place your child in a sitting position, and sit facing her. If your child cannot sit without support, place her so that she can see both your face and the objects you will show her.

Say '(Name) look at me'. When she is looking, say 'Look, here's a . . . look at the . . .'. If she is interested, let her play with the object, then repeat with other objects.

Score *plus* if your child makes eye contact with you, and then looks at the object or picture you show her, and maintains her attention for a minute or more at least once.

How to Teach

Lack of attention may show itself in failure to make eye contact with you and/or with the object, or in fleeting eye contact, perhaps interspersed with wriggling around.

Aim first to establish eye contact with you, leaving objects till later. First, say your child's name, then wait for her to respond. If she doesn't, say her name again and then gently turn her head until you make eye contact. Then speak again and stroke her cheek to reward her response.

You could also ask someone to measure how much time, in a two-minute session, your child spends looking at you. It is best to take an average of several sessions. Then choose a time which is slightly longer to work towards as your objective. When this objective is reached, choose a slightly longer time. Build up gradually until your child looks at you for about 30 seconds out of the two minutes. (This need not be continuous — she may look away from you and back again several times during the session.)

Now introduce a toy to your sessions, and build up gradually until your child is looking either at you or at the toy for about half of the two-minute session.

How do you get your child to look? A sense of drama is often the answer — you must make yourself and, through play, the toy more interesting than anything else in the room, and more interesting than wriggling about. Reserve your most enthusiastic responses for the times when your child does look at you.

Your child needs to learn that paying attention to you is a rewarding experience, that all sorts of exciting things happen in that space between her and you.

Sometimes lively encouragement is not enough. If you do not make progress in this way, there are other approaches you can try.

1. *Use a quiet room.* Take your child into the quietest place in the house for these sessions. Quiet, calm talking can also be more effective with some children. If this works, introduce other distractions gradually.

2. *Follow your child's lead.* If your child is already playing actively, get down and play alongside her, taking your turn with the toys she favours. Then begin to talk to her about what she is doing. Help her with her game, without taking over. When she is enjoying your presence in a 'follow-

ing' role, begin gradually to introduce ideas and objects of your own. Finally, ask her to look at you before you show her something new.

3. *Giving a tangible reward for attention.* If the approaches above get you nowhere, you may need to tie attention in with something else you know your child likes. Food is often the answer with very young children. You can either give a tiny piece of food when your child looks at you during a teaching session, or time your teaching sessions for mealtime, requiring that your child looks at you before you give each mouth-full. This is a short-term measure. As soon as your child is looking at you readily, start giving the food less frequently, or require more looking for the same amount of food. If, right from the start, you give praise as well as food, your child will in time be happy with praise alone. You will find more information about reinforcing with food in Book 2, Chapter 3.

Playtime and Round-the-house Activities

Of course, teaching attending skills need not be limited to special teaching sessions. You may find you need no special teaching sessions at all. Attending can be practised at nappy-changing, mealtimes, bath-times and cuddling times. Brothers and sisters can take part too — most children enjoy showing things to the baby, and getting her to look at them.

Remembering and Extending

As you move on through this sequence, and to Sequence RL.B., continue to spend time simply talking to your child and encouraging her to look at the things you show her. If her eye contact with you seems to decrease over time, don't worry — this is quite normal as the child's interest in objects increases. She will continue to glance at you occasionally as you play with toys together, and will reserve her most intense eye contact for talking times.

Once you have reached this point, you are well on your way to teaching your child to communicate, and the turn-taking and imitation activities described in Book 3, Chapter 2, become vitally important. You will have more areas of learning to think about from now on, but you can proceed with confidence that your child has a sound basis for gaining new skills in understanding and in expressing herself.

LOOKS AT PICTURES OR OBJECTS FOR TWO MINUTES WITH AN ADULT

RL.A.10

This is an extension of the previous skill in this sequence.

How to Assess

Materials: A colourful picture book or some interesting toys.

Method: Sit your child on your lap, and show her pictures or objects, talking to her about each one and allowing her to handle them.

Score *plus* if your child attends to the pictures or objects for at least two minutes. Remember to choose clear uncluttered pictures. She may look away from the pictures and objects to you from time to time, but should not be distracted by other objects or events in the room.

How to Teach

Teach as for RL.A.9, gradually extending the time for which your child will attend.

CHANGES FACIAL EXPRESSION IN RESPONSE TO FRIENDLY OR ANGRY VOICES

RL.A.11

Here we look at a different aspect of the child's response to her environment. We look at whether the child attaches significance to the tone of voice of familiar adults.

At about this time you may also be working on RL.B.12, in which we note the child's response to different facial expressions. Clearly the two items are related, but whereas in RL.B.12 the child may respond to a facial expression by imitating it as part of a game, here we are concerned with the child's immediate emotional response.

How to Assess

Method: Observe your child's reaction when a parent or other familiar person speaks in an angry voice (most likely to another adult or an older child) and in a friendly voice.

Score *plus* if your child changes her facial expression in response to the tone of voice. For example, when she hears an angry voice, she may become still, watch the face of the speaker and look fearful. When she hears a friendly voice, she may smile.

How to Teach

Of course, you don't want to teach your child to be fearful, or arrange for angry voices to be heard in order to alarm her! But there are other ways in which you can increase your child's sensitivity to different tones of voice. Make the most of nursery rhymes and simple stories that involve changes in expression. Nursery rhymes such as *Humpty Dumpty* and *Little Miss Muffet* and *Three Little Kittens* are so familiar that we tend to rush through them in a uniform, singsong tone, but when you think about what actually happens in them, the potential for drama is clear! Use your face as well as your voice to convey the emotional tone, and look for signs that your child is imitating you. Your child will not understand the words of the stories or nursery rhymes for some time, but the changing emotional tones conveyed in your voice in themselves tell a story — one of immense interest to your child.

LISTENS TO ONE PERSON TALK IN A NOISY ENVIRONMENT

RL.A.15

When your child is first learning to attend, it will be very hard for her to maintain her attention in a busy, noisy environment. But as her attending skills develop, she will learn to single out the sounds that are of most interest to her, and focus on those to the exclusion of everything else.

Most children learn this skill without any special teaching, provided that opportunities are given. It's easy to forget to talk to our children when we are busy in the supermarket or when the house is full of people and activity. Just keep in mind that your child can benefit from listening to you in such challenging situations.

How to Assess

Method: Observe your child when she is listening to one adult in a noisy environment.

Score *plus* if she continues to attend to the speaker despite the environmental noise.

LISTENS TO A COMPLETE SHORT STORY

RL.A.37

The remaining three items in this sequence are concerned with the child's ability to attend to a story.

At the 18 months–2 years level of development, the child can be expected to attend to an entire short story. A typical short story will have about a dozen pictures (perhaps one to an opening) and one or two sentences to accompany each picture. The *Dick Bruna* storybooks (published by Methuen) fit this description. You will find many alternatives in children's bookshops. Note that we are talking here about storybooks, as distinct from books which show a series of loosely related pictures.

Listening to stories ties in closely with the book skills described in Sequence FM.G.

How to Assess

Method: Read a short story to your child.

Score *plus* if she attends for the entire story by looking at the pictures and at your face.

How to Teach

Teach your child to attend to short stories by making them an important part of every day. As you read, show your child that you enjoy the experience.

Most children have favourite stories that they want to hear over and over again. Don't discourage this, as children enjoy and learn from such repetition. You may, of course, have to pretend your own enjoyment, if you are reading *The Three Little Pigs* for the seventh time in a week!

If your child attends to pictures, but loses attention during stories, begin by making up brief stories around the pictures that you show her. Instead of saying 'Here's a spoon' and moving on, you could say 'This spoon helped Katie eat porridge for breakfast, and baked beans for lunch, and peas and potato and jelly for dinner'. Look for books which show an individual child going through all the events of a day, and describe the pictures in a way that relates to your child's own experiences. Choose your first storybooks very carefully, ensuring that there is a picture for each event, and that the words and events are familiar to your child. Why not use some family snapshots to make up your child's own story.

ATTENDS TO A STORY FOR 10 MINUTES, ONE TO ONE

RL.A.64

In PS.A.55, we look at whether the child can attend to a story for 10 minutes in a group setting — at playgroup or preschool. Here we are concerned with whether your child can attend to a story for 10 minutes when it's just the two of you.

How to Assess

Materials: A child's storybook with 20 to 30 words to each page. The story should take about 10 minutes to read.

Method: Read the story to your child.

Score *plus* if your child attends to the story without being distracted by outside noises or stopping the story to talk about other things.

How to Teach

Build up gradually to this level from the short stories described in RL.A.37.

Try reading two or more short stories in a row, before progressing to longer stories.

If your child's attention wanders during the story, bring it back by changing your pace or tone of voice, asking her simple questions ('Can you see the . . .?') or adding your own comments about what is happening.

ANSWERS SIMPLE QUESTIONS, VERBALLY OR BY POINTING, DURING A STORY

RL.A.91

Here the child is required both to attend to the story as it is read and to retain basic information about the story, so that she can answer simple questions.

How to Assess

Materials: A story of the kind described in RL.A.64.

Method: Read the story, pausing from time to time to ask simple questions about it, such as 'What did the big, bad wolf do?' or 'What did the caterpillar want to eat?' Questions such as these require the child to think about the story. Questions such as 'Where's . . .?' or 'Can you see the . . .?' can, of course, be asked, but should not be counted towards the score.

Score *plus* if your child can answer at least one question, such as those described above. If your child is not yet talking, she may answer the question by pointing, gesturing or acting out her answer.

How to Teach

Asking questions as you read is a good way to help your child to focus on the critical events of a story. Make your questions part of a two-way conversation — your child should not feel that she is being quizzed.

If the story is a familiar one, you can ask questions about events that are coming as well as events that have passed.

Remembering and Extending

This skill marks the end of this sequence, but of course it does not mean the end of sharing books with your child. With such a wealth of material available, you will always be able to find books that challenge your child in new ways. Don't feel that you must always be pushing your child ahead — she will enjoy going back to her earlier storybooks from time to time, and may enjoy 'reading' these to you, or to herself. Let her help you choose books from the library or bookshop — if a fully free choice seems too much for her to start with, select two books and ask which one she would like.

CHAPTER 2

RL.B: Responding to Gestures and Simple Directions

In this sequence your child will learn to use her attending skills to follow simple directions. She will learn, in the first instance, by responding to gestures and words, and from there will go on to respond to words alone.

If your child lacks either the Fine Motor or the Gross Motor skills to follow these directions, you can delay this sequence until a little later, or if the physical problems are likely to persist, adapt the activities to include actions that your child can do. This may seem a daunting task, and certainly professional help would be valuable in such a case, but keep in mind that the main purpose of this group of skills is to teach your child the connection between words and objects, and between words and actions. What those words, actions and objects actually are is a secondary issue.

The skills in this sequence are all mastered in the first 18 months or so of normal development. This sequence forms a basis for the more complex and specific directions used in other Receptive Language Sequences.

As in Sequence RL.A, we do not usually distinguish here between teaching and practising in play and round-the-house situations. All the skills below can be taught in a variety of situations, and special teaching times should be set aside only when a child is not making progress.

Below we list all the skills in this sequence.

6 to 9 months

12. Changes facial expression in response to an adult's facial expression.
13. Responds to simple requests when accompanied by gestures.

9 to 12 months

15. Responds to own name by turning.
16. Responds to firm directions by ceasing activity.
17. Waves or claps on verbal direction.
18. Locates familiar objects when named.
19. Locates family members when named.

12 to 15 months

21. Gives an object to the speaker when asked.
22. Points to an object when named.

15 to 18 months

26. Follows one simple two-word or three-word direction.
27. Follows three simple two-word or three-word directions.
28. Brings a known object from another room when asked.

CHANGES FACIAL EXPRESSION IN RESPONSE TO AN ADULT'S FACIAL EXPRESSION

RL.B.12

Because faces are the most important 'objects' in the baby's environment, facial gestures are frequently the first to which she will respond. She will show her response, at first, by changing her own facial expression — later she will begin to directly imitate the expression she sees.

How to Assess

Method: Sit at eye level with your child. When you have her attention, change your own facial expression — from neutral to happy, and then from neutral to 'angry'. You can also experiment with other facial expressions, such as open-mouthed surprise, or 'funny' faces.

Score *plus* if your child responds by changing her own facial expression. She need not copy directly what you do.

How to Teach

Encouraging such responses is a big subject — and an important one. We discuss it fully in the sections on Turn-taking and Imitation in Book 3, Chapter 2. We suggest that you read this chapter now, and use it as a guide for teaching your child to respond to not only facial gestures but other kinds of gestures — and sounds — as well.

RESPONDS TO SIMPLE REQUESTS WHEN ACCOMPANIED BY GESTURES

RL.B.13

You can teach your child the meanings of many words by pairing them with gestures. When you hold out your hand, saying 'Give it to me', you are preparing your child to respond to the words alone, later on. The same applies when you wave your hand while saying 'Wave bye-bye', or when you hold out your arms saying 'Give me a cuddle'.

How to Assess

Method: While your child is playing with an object, call her attention to you, hold out your hand and say 'Give it to me'. Or substitute another request and gesture, such as one of those described above.

Score *plus* if your child carries out your request on at least one occasion.

How to Teach

Choose a few simple requests that you would like your child to follow. We suggest that you include giving, waving and clapping hands.

Make your request, accompanied by a gesture, several times each day. Give physical help if necessary, phasing it out as your child begins to respond to the word and gesture without help.

RESPONDS TO OWN NAME BY TURNING

RL.B.15

When your child achieves this skill, she shows that she can recognise one particular sound, out of all the sounds around her, as particularly relevant to her.

How to Assess

Method: Choose a time when you child is showing interest in something and there is plenty of chatter going on around her. Stand about 120 cm away and call her name.

Score *plus* if your child responds by turning and looking to you.

How to Teach

Many parents say: 'Oh, but we never call by name. We call her all sorts of things — Tiddlywinks or Greedy-Guts or Cherry Pie, depending on her mood or ours.' We certainly would not want to discourage this, as parents who do this usually use very lively and effective spontaneous language with their children. But if this is you, do try to use your baby's name, or a consistent nickname, some of the time!

RESPONDS TO FIRM DIRECTIONS BY CEASING ACTIVITY

RL.B.16

If your child is not yet mobile and getting into strife, this item will not be relevant to you, and you can return to it later.

For the mobile child, understanding and responding to firm directions is important not only to discipline, but, more important, to safety.

The term 'no' has its place, but it loses its meaning if used too often. If you find yourself saying 'no' umpteen times a day, we refer you to Book 2, Chapter 6.

How to Assess

Score *plus* if your child stops an undesirable activity, at least momentarily, when you speak to her firmly.

How to Teach

This skill can only be taught in situations that arise naturally.

Initially you may need to remove your child from the source of the trouble, to back up your direction.

Although your child will respond to your tone of voice, rather than your words, it's a good idea to get into the habit of giving positive directions wherever possible. 'The books stay on the shelves' can be said just as firmly as 'Don't pull the books off', and such positive directions help strengthen the child's sense of how things should be.

WAVES OR CLAPS ON VERBAL DIRECTION

RL.B.17

Here you will extend the teaching begun in RL.B.13, by gradually phasing out your demonstrations of waving and/or clapping (or other gestures which your child imitates). Responding to the word 'give' is discussed a little later, in RL.B.21.

How to Assess

Method: Make eye contact with your child, and say 'Wave bye-bye' or 'Clap hands'. Do not demonstrate. If there is no response, try again on another occasion.

Score *plus* if your child waves or claps in response to your direction. Her waving or clapping need not be very accurate, but it must be clear that she is trying to do what you have asked.

How to Teach

Continuing on from RL.B.13, begin to ask your child to wave or clap (or make some other familiar action) without showing her first. If she does not respond, remind her with a demonstration, then give the direction again. The best reward for a correct response is for you to join in the action once she has started.

LOCATES FAMILIAR OBJECTS WHEN NAMED

RL.B.18

Here your child will show whether she knows the names of familiar toys. Familiar objects such as the child's cup or spoon will do just as well.

How to Assess

Materials: Select the object or objects that your child is most likely to know by name.

Method: Place an object about a metre away from your child, making sure that she has seen it. Distract her for a moment by talking to her, and then ask 'Where's . . .?'

Score *plus* if your child will turn and locate at least one familiar object when it is named in this way.

How to Teach

Select a toy that is familiar to your child, and one which you know she likes. Proceed as in the assessment, and if she does not respond, draw her attention to the toy saying 'There's . . .'.

When she can look for this first object, you can teach others in the same way. Remember that by doing this, you are preparing the way for your child to name the object, later on, so select objects for attention that you think your child will want to talk about.

LOCATES FAMILY MEMBERS WHEN NAMED

RL.B.19

This is an enjoyable game to play when all the family is present. Close friends and pets can also be included.

When your child can play this game, she will show that she is connecting words to familiar people, and that she can choose between the people around her in response to the words she hears.

How to Assess

Method: When the child is with two or more other family members, say 'Where's Daddy . . . Mummy . . . Nana . . . Andrew . . . Fido?'

Score *plus* if your child locates at least one family member when he or she is named.

How to Teach

If your child does not locate the person you name, have that person call her (or, in the case of Fido, point your child in the right direction). Repeat the name — 'Look, there's Fido' or 'I'm Nana'.

Give your child opportunities to show that she can do this without help.

Remembering and Extending

You can continue playing this game until all family members and close friends are known, and beyond. At Macquarie the teachers play it with the children in the Toddler Class, to help them to learn each other's names. They use a song:

Where oh where is sweet little Sarah?
Who knows where she is?

GIVES AN OBJECT TO THE SPEAKER WHEN ASKED

RL.B.21

The actions of giving and pointing (which is taught in RL.B.22) can be used to indicate a choice between alternatives. You have probably used the direction 'give' many times already, pairing the word with the gesture.

Many small children respond to 'give' by hastily putting the object out of reach, with or without a gleeful grin! If your child does this, she needs to learn that giving can be part of an enjoyable two-way game, and is not merely a means of depriving her of a forbidden treasure!

How to Assess

Materials: Any toy.

Method: When your child is holding the toy, make eye contact with her and say 'Give it to me.' Do not hold out your hand. Give three tries.

Score *plus* if your child gives you the toy in at least two out of three tries.

How to Teach

Teach by playing a game in which you and your child take turns: 'Give it to me' . . . 'Now I give it to you.'

Give physical help if it is needed for the first couple of turns, and then give your child a chance to give without help.

Continue teaching until your child gives the object to you at your first request.

Playtime and Round-the-house Activities

As well as playing this game, you can use situations that arise naturally to practise 'give'. Try involving your child in a domestic activity, such as cooking, and give her something to hold which you will soon need. When the time comes, say something like: 'Oh, I need the . . . now. You give me the . . .'

Your child may also initiate interactions by giving things to you spontaneously. This is a significant communicative gesture. Respond by showing a warm interest in the object she has given you.

Remembering and Extending

This skill will be practised and extended in other Receptive Language Sequences. Note that this skill and RL.B.22 are prerequisites for beginning Sequence RL.C: Choosing Between Alternatives: Objects and Pictures.

POINTS TO AN OBJECT WHEN NAMED

RL.B.22

Soon your child will be learning to choose between alternative objects or pictures, and it will help her if she can point to indicate her choice.

No choice is involved in this activity: it concentrates on the direction 'point'.

Many small children enjoy pointing to objects — it is a way of sharing their interests with others. Often a point develops from a more general reaching action with little specific teaching.

How to Assess

Materials: A familiar toy or object which your child knows by name.

Method: Place the toy in front of your child and say 'Point to . . .'. Give three tries, using different objects if you wish.

Score *plus* if your child raises her arm and points with an isolated finger (need not be her index finger) in two out of three tries.

How to Teach

Continue on from RL.B.18 by pointing to the object named. (You may well have been doing this anyway.) Say: 'Look, I can point to . . . You point to . . .'

Give physical help if necessary, by lifting your child's arm and uncurling her index finger with yours. Gradually reduce the help you give her.

Playtime and Round-the-house Activities

You can point to all sorts of things around the house, near and far. Picture books provide excellent pointing practice — refer to Sequence FM.G: Book Skills.

Remembering and Extending

You will find that the pointing action is used in many ways in the sequences that follow. Sequence RL.C: Choosing Between Alternatives: Objects and Pictures can be introduced now.

Think about ways in which your child could use her pointing action to communicate with others. Show her that she can point to indicate that she wants that dolly on the high shelf or her bottle, or a ride on the swing. Always respond when she points to things, so that she learns that this is a reliable way to draw your attention to the things that interest her. Of course, you will name things for her as well. Pointing (and other gestures) are not learned *instead* of talking. By helping the child to extend her communication skills they will ultimately help her to learn to talk. This point is discussed further in Book 3, Chapter 2.

FOLLOWS ONE SIMPLE TWO-WORD OR THREE-WORD DIRECTION

RL.B.26

At this point there are likely to be several simple directions that your child follows already — directions such as 'look', 'take', 'point', 'give', 'wave bye-bye' and 'clap hands'.

Now it is time to diversify the directions that your child follows. We begin by teaching directions that are expressed as phrases rather than single words. The child learns to recognise each phrase as a single entity, and is not yet required to distinguish between the individual words within the phrase. It may help to look at such directions as long and complicated single words. Your child does not know, and does not yet need to know, that they really consist of several words, each of which can stand quite independently.

The first such direction that a child follows will reflect the games and playful rituals that the child's family enjoys. It might well be 'Tickle Mummy' or 'Twiddle your toes' or 'Bounce like a ball'. It will be a phrase that she hears often, and will probably be one that she associates with fun and excitment.

Assess this skill informally, by observing your child's response when you give simple two-word or three-word directions. Score *plus* if she can follow at least one such direction.

If your child does not follow one such direction, choose one you use often in your play with your child, and teach by demonstration, adding physical help if necessary.

FOLLOWS THREE SIMPLE TWO-WORD OR THREE-WORD DIRECTIONS

RL.B.27

This is an extension of RL.B.26.

The child should now show that she can distinguish between three different two-word or three-word directions. Again, the content of the phrases you use is entirely up to you. You could introduce some more playful ones and/or include some more practical ones such as 'Sit down' or 'Shut the door'.

Assess and teach as for RL.B.26.

BRINGS A KNOWN OBJECT FROM ANOTHER ROOM WHEN ASKED

RL.B.28

The last simple direction in this sequence requires the child to keep a specific request in mind while she goes to another room, finds an object and brings it back to you. Once she can do this she has an excellent basis for mastering the more complex directions in the sequences that follow.

How to Assess

Method: Ask your child to bring you an object from another room. The object should be something with which she is very familiar and something which can always be found in much the same place.

Score *plus* if your child brings you the object you have requested.

This item is applicable only to children who are walking. If your child is not yet walking, continue with other sequences and return to this item when it becomes appropriate.

How to Teach

Begin by asking your child to bring something familiar from the other side of the room. Next pretend to discover, as you leave a room with your child, that you have forgotten something: 'Oh! We forgot to bring Teddy. You get Teddy.' Wait for your child just outside the door. Give your child something to take to someone in another room — this way, she need only remember her mission for the one-way trip. Finally ask her to bring you something from another room, as described under How to Assess.

REMEMBERING AND EXTENDING THIS SEQUENCE

The skills that your child has learned in this sequence will be extended in the other Receptive Languages Sequences. Perhaps you have already begun to work on RL.C: Choosing Between Alternatives: Objects and Pictures, and you can now begin to work on RL.D: Responding to Directions Involving Action Words.

CHAPTER 3

RL.C: Choosing Between Alternatives: Objects and Pictures

This sequence concentrates on teaching the names of objects. The child shows that she knows the names of objects by choosing the one that is named when a choice is offered. Later on in the sequence, the child also learns to identify objects by their function, and to place them in categories such as 'animals' and 'food'.

Because she shows that she knows the names of objects by selecting them, the child need not be able to talk in order to progress through the sequence. Teaching her the names of objects will, of course, help her to talk, because she must know what something is before she can talk about it. If your child is talking, you can encourage her to name the objects as well as select them.

When you select objects to use in assessing and teaching, choose things which are interesting to your child — things that you expect she will want to talk about.

You will be teaching items from other sequences at the same time as you are working through this one. You can alternate between the sequences, or teach one objective from each at the same time, depending on the time you have available.

Below we list all the skills in this sequence.

12 to 15 months

20. Chooses an object when named, choice of two.

15 to 18 months

23. Points to distant objects out of doors.
24. Chooses an object when named, choice of three.
25. Points to one body part when named.

18 months to 2 years

31. Points to four body parts when named.
32. Chooses an object when named, choice of four.
33. Chooses three items of clothing when named.
34. Chooses a picture when named, choice of two.
35. Chooses a picture when named, choice of four.
36. Points to seven body parts when named.

2 to 3 years

43. Points to 10 body parts when named.
44. Points to self when asked 'Where's . . .?'
45. Chooses a picture when named, choice of nine.
46. Points to two objects when described by function, choice of four.
47. Points to four objects when described by function, choice of six.
48. Points to six objects when described by function, choice of six.
49. Shown five different food items, selects three when named.
50. Shown five different animals, selects three when named.
51. Shown five different furniture items, selects three when named.
52. Responds to 'Give me . . . AND . . .', choice of four objects.
53. Responds to 'Give me . . . AND . . .', from anywhere in the room.

3 to 4 years

67. Points to 13 body parts.
68. Points to 16 body parts.
69. Selects a boy and a girl, when shown pictures of both.
70. Selects a man and a woman, when shown pictures of both.
71. Selects objects according to category — food.
72. Selects objects according to category — animals.
73. Selects objects according to category — clothes.
74. Selects objects according to category — furniture.

CHOOSES AN OBJECT WHEN NAMED, CHOICE OF TWO

RL.C.20

In this exercise, the child shows that she knows the names of familiar objects by choosing the one that is named to her in preference to another.

Teach RL.B.21 and 22 (responding to 'give' and 'point') before teaching this skill.

When you choose the objects to use in assessing and teaching this skill, choose objects that interest her — ones that she may, in time, want to talk about. Try, too, to choose toys that are of equal interest to your child — otherwise she may feel tempted to go for her beloved Rabbit even though she knows you said 'spoon'.

The notes below relate to assessing and teaching the selection of two objects, but we advise teaching a second pair once these first two have been mastered. This is a crucial skill, and its achievement is something of an event, because it opens the door to a whole new area of teaching and learning. It is worth spending extra time strengthening this skill before continuing with the sequence.

How to Assess

Materials: Two familiar toys (see notes above).
Method: Sit facing your child across her highchair or table. Say 'Look, I've got . . . and . . .'. Give her time to look at each. Now say 'Point to . . .' or 'Take . . .' or 'Give me . . .' (whichever direction you feel most comfortable with).

Give five tries — two for each object, and one extra try. Change the position of the toys from time to time.

Score *plus* if your child points to or takes the named object in four out of the five tries — two for each object.

How to Teach

Sit opposite your child as described under How to Assess.

Show her the toys, naming each one in turn. Then ask her to look at you. This is most important, as your child cannot respond to what you say unless she is attending to you.

It can be helpful to hide the toys in your lap after you have shown them to her and while you bring her attention back to you.

Then say 'Point to the . . .' (or whatever direction you have chosen) and bring the toys back into view.

If your child reaches for both of the toys at once, move them back out of her reach and repeat your direction.

If she reaches for the toy you have named, move it towards her so that she can point to it, or take it. Congratulate her warmly: 'Clever girl, you found the . . . That's the . . .!'

If she reaches towards the other toy, or ignores your direction, move the 'wrong' toy slightly back and the 'right' toy slightly forward, so that it is more prominent. If she then takes the named toy, praise her and repeat the exercise.

If she is still uncertain of what to do, go back to the beginning of the exercise and spend extra time looking at and naming each of the objects. Repeat your direction and, if necessary, guide her hand towards the toy you have named.

Continue teaching until your child takes the named toy in four out of five tries for three consecutive teaching sessions. It is important to be very sure that she has mastered this skill before you start to offer her a wider choice of objects.

Playtime and Round-the-house Activities

Spend time playing with and talking about the objects you have selected for this activity outside your special teaching sessions. Play a hide-and-seek game, hiding one of the toys under a rug or upturned box and saying: 'Where's . . .? That's it, you found . . .!'

Think about other objects that you might include in future selection activities, and emphasise their names to your child.

Remembering and Extending

This skill is directly extended in RL.C.24. But before moving on, we suggest that you work through RL.C.20 again using a second pair of objects.

POINTS TO DISTANT OBJECTS OUT OF DOORS

RL.C.23

In this item, the child is asked to point to something she cannot touch — something that is far away.

How to Assess

Method: When out of doors or looking out the window, ask your child to point to something that is far away, such as a plane or a tree or a car. Use whatever direction feels comfortable — 'Point to the plane' or 'Show me the tree' or 'Where's the car?'

Score *plus* if your child can indicate at least one object in this way.

How to Teach

Make a habit of pointing out interesting distant objects to your child whenever opportunities arise. Make sure that there are a few which you refer to often, so that the names become familiar.

If necessary, help your child to point in the early stages.

Playtime and Round-the-house Activities

This is a good activity for car trips, provided that your child can see out the window. Make a game of it, involving other family members as well.

Inside the house, point out the lights (these are often fascinating to small children), mobiles in your child's bedroom and pictures on the wall.

Remembering and Extending

This is an easy skill to maintain and extend — pointing out objects in the environment will become second nature to you!

CHOOSES AN OBJECT WHEN NAMED, CHOICE OF THREE

RL.C.24

Here your child demonstrates the same skill that she learned in RL.C.20, except that now she must choose from three alternatives.

Assess and teach as for RL.C.20 but presenting three familiar objects or toys.

As for RL.C.20 we suggest that this exercise is repeated, using a different set of objects, once the first set has been mastered.

This skill will be directly extended in RL.C.32.

POINTS TO ONE BODY PART WHEN NAMED

RL.C.25

When your child has completed this sequence, she will have learned to point to 16 body parts. The D.S.I. will give you a guide as to how many are normally mastered at each level of development, but this should not be seen as a firm rule. The easiest, most natural way to teach body parts is to teach them continuously, one at a time, introducing a new one when the previous one has been mastered.

Use normal daily activities to teach body parts. It makes no sense to sit a child in a chair and ask her to point to her chin five times in a row! Teach at bath-time, dressing time, playtime. Stop on your way past the mirror to find body parts with your child. Make use of dolls and teddies, and pictures too. The main points about teaching this skill are:

- Know your objectives, so that the relevant body parts get sufficient emphasis.
- Don't always show your child: let your child show you.

You can teach the body parts in the order that seems best to you. Hair, mouth and hand are usually among the earliest ones to be learned; arm, leg and back are among the later ones. In between, you could teach nose, finger, eyes, ears, toes, chin, teeth, tongue, tummy and knee. Be guided by the interest your child shows in her own and other people's bodies.

How to Assess

Method: Choosing the body part your child is most likely to know, say 'Where's your . . .?' Give three tries. You can then try other body parts, giving three tries for each.

Score *plus* if your child points to one named body part in two out of three tries.

Note that once your child knows four body parts, including the first one, she scores *plus* for RL.C.31; when she knows seven she scores for RL.C.36, and so on.

POINTS TO FOUR BODY PARTS WHEN NAMED

RL.C.31

Using any body parts, including the one learned at RL.C.25, assess and teach as for RL.C.25.

CHOOSES AN OBJECT WHEN NAMED, CHOICE OF FOUR

RL.C.32

Now your child must select the named object from four alternatives.

Assess as for RL.C.20, using four objects and giving three tries for each object. Your child must select each of the four objects in two out of three tries to score *plus*.

Teach as for RL.C.20 but using four familiar objects or toys.

Once your child has mastered the initial set of objects, vary your sets of objects to include all the things she now knows in different combinations.

Your child can now move on to other kinds of selection activitives, but do give practice at object selection from time to time, so that she remembers what she has learned.

CHOOSES THREE ITEMS OF CLOTHING WHEN NAMED

RL.C.33

Here the objects to be selected are familiar items that the child encounters every day — her own clothes.

This is just one example of the way in which objects familiar to the child can be used to extend her skills in choosing between alternatives. The same kind of thing can be done at mealtime, bath-time and so on — in any situation where the child encounters the same set of objects each day. Learning the names of these familiar objects will help her to participate more actively in her daily routines, and to talk about the experiences she shares.

How to Assess

Materials: A set of your child's own clothes — at least four items.

Method: This item can be assessed with the clothes displayed on the table, but it is best to use a natural setting and time. Spread out her clothes on her bed (or wherever) when you dress her in the morning, and ask her to select each item as it is needed.

Score *plus* if your child selects at least three items of her own clothing when you name them.

How to Teach

Teach by making a practice of naming objects such as clothing to your child as you use them, and by giving her opportunities to select them herself. You can help her to make her selection in the same ways that you have taught earlier selection skills — these techniques are suitable for play and round-the-house situations, as well as for more structured teaching sessions.

Remembering and Extending

You will find all sorts of ways to extend your child's selecting skills in round-the-house situations. You can offer a greater choice of objects, for instance by asking her to find a particular item of clothing in the clean-clothes basket or drawer. You can ask her to bring things to you from another room. Later on you will be able to involve colour and other abstract concepts in your directions.

CHOOSES A PICTURE WHEN NAMED, CHOICE OF TWO

RL.C.34

Choosing pictures from among alternatives presents a little more challenge to the child than choosing objects. For a start, it is unlikely that she is familiar with any individual pictures, in the way that she was familiar with the objects used earlier in this sequence. The child cannot handle pictures in the same way, as they are not such a 'real' and concrete part of her world.

It is important that children learn to recognise and choose between pictures, not only because this extends the visual discrimination needed for more advanced learning, but also because it will enrich her play and her experience of the world around her.

You will need to give some thought to materials before you assess and teach picture selection. Here are some guidelines:

- Choose pictures of objects familiar to your child. This will help her to see the relationship between picture and object (see the notes on FM.I.77).
- Choose pictures that are quite large (at least 10 cm square) and easy for your child to handle. Mounting them on cardboard is a good idea, and covering them with self-adhesive clear plastic film will render them relatively child-proof!
- Choose pictures which are fairly realistic. You could use photographs, but clear, realistic, colour illustrations work well.
- Keep in mind that you will need to vary your materials. Although you may need only a few at present, a stock of 10 or so will prove very useful.

You can draw pictures yourself, or cut them out from magazines and mount them on cardboard. One very valuable source of pictures is the *Ladybird Picture Books* — Series 704. These books are not expensive, and are available in many newsagencies and bookshops. The first in the series (*Ladybird First Picture Book*) will provide plenty of pictures to start with. At Macquarie the teachers removes pages from these books, mount them on cardboard, and cover them with plastic film. Other copies are left intact for looking, pointing and talking.

For assessment and the first stages of teaching, choose pictures of two objects very familiar to your child — perhaps pictures of objects used earlier in this sequence.

How to Assess

Materials: Two pictures of objects known to your child.

Method: Place the pictures on the table in front of your child, or hold them up within her reach. Say 'Point to the . . .' (or 'take' or 'give'). Give three tries for each picture, changing the positions of the pictures from time to time.

Score *plus* if your child selects each picture at least twice.

How to Teach

The teaching procedure is exactly the same as that for teaching object selection. Refer to RL.C.20.

Playtime and Round-the-house Activities

Looking at books and pictures, always important, is especially important while teaching this skill. Look for books with large, clear pictures, showing one or two objects to a page. Books which show two pictures to an opening can be used for practising selection.

Remembering and Extending

As with the object selection tasks, it is a good idea to repeat the procedure with a second set of pictures once the first set has been mastered.

This skill is directly extended in RL.C.35 where the child is asked to choose between four pictures. You might like to give a choice of three as an in-between step.

CHOOSES A PICTURE WHEN NAMED, CHOICE OF FOUR

RL.C.35

Just as you did with objects, you can now help your child to choose between pictures when a wider choice is offered.

Assess and teach as for RL.C.34, using four pictures.

Once the original set of pictures has been mastered, repeat the exercise with a different set of pictures.

For variety, find picture books which show three or four pictures to an opening, and ask your child to point to the picture you name. Or you could paste four pictures onto a single piece of cardboard. This is a good preparation for RL.C.45, where the pictures are presented on a board.

POINTS TO SEVEN BODY PARTS WHEN NAMED

RL.C.36

Using any seven body parts, including the four learned earlier in the sequence, assess and teach as for RL.C.25.

POINTS TO 10 BODY PARTS WHEN NAMED

RL.C.43

Using any 10 body parts, including the seven learned earlier in the sequence, assess and teach as for RL.C.25.

POINTS TO SELF WHEN ASKED 'WHERE'S . . . ?'

RL.C.44

From babyhood, children respond when they hear their own names. Yet the ability to point to themselves when asked 'Where's . . .?' comes much later. In the early stages, the name functions as a signal to the child that her attention is required — that something is happening in which she is involved. This is rather different from seeing oneself as a separate entity that can be defined by a name. Psychologists tell us that very young children do not see the clear distinction between 'self' and 'other' that we perceive as adults.

Nevertheless, your child may have attained this skill at an earlier developmental level if you have been emphasising names — her own and others. RL.B.19 describes a game where the child learns to attend to names and to seek out the named person.

How to Assess

Method: Choose a situation in which there is at least one other person present, besides you and your child. Say 'Where's . . .?' Refer to all those present, and include your child's name three times.

Score *plus* if your child points to herself in at least two of the three tries.

How to Teach

You can ask this question any time, anywhere. There should be no need to set special time aside.

If your child does not respond, take her hand and help her to point to herself — '*Here's* Kylie'.

If your child attends playgroup, perhaps each session could begin with a name-recognition game, such as this one:

Where oh where is sweet little Kylie?
Who knows where she is?

'*Here* she is. *Here's* Kylie.'

Remembering and Extending

Here are some ways to extend this exercise:

- Try playing this game in the mirror, with two or more faces grouped together. Is there a mirror at child level in her room?
- Does your child point herself out in photographs?
- Write your child's name on her artwork and other possessions: 'This is Kylie's painting. It's yours. You did this lovely painting!'

CHOOSES A PICTURE WHEN NAMED, CHOICE OF NINE

RL.C.45

This is an extension of earlier picture selecting skills.

It teaches the child to scan all over a page, and consider and discard many distractions, until she finds the picture she is looking for. This skill will help her to enjoy more challenging picture books, and later on she will use it when reading.

The problem of where to find materials is easily solved if you have a nine-piece lotto board showing familiar objects (see FM.I.106). Or you could divide a square of cardboard (about 20 cm square) into nine smaller squares, and draw or paste a picture in each one. Alternatively, you could find a page in a picture book which shows many different objects — this could be used in an initial assessment to see if your child will need more structured materials.

How to Assess

Materials: As above.

Method: Place the lotto board on the table, and give your child a moment to look it over. Then say 'Point to the . . .'. Repeat for each picture.

Score *plus* if your child selects at least six of the nine pictures.

How to Teach

If your child has mastered RL.C.35 (choice of four pictures), but cannot select from a choice of nine, teach by building up the choices gradually. Your first objective might be 'chooses picture, choice of five'; your next might be 'chooses picture, choice of seven'; and so on. Use your own judgment about how many in-between steps your child will need.

Home-made materials are really the only answer for these in-between steps. Your child is sure to like your drawings, however imperfect they seem to you, but if you'd rather not draw, look out for suitable stickers and transfers in newsagencies and gift shops.

Playtime and Round-the-house Activities

Look through your child's picture books to find those that suit her current picture selection skills. Perhaps she would enjoy helping to make her own picture boards, pasting pictures on to start with, and then selecting the ones you name.

Remembering and Extending

You will find plenty of opportunities to practise and extend this skill as you look at picture books together.

POINTS TO TWO OBJECTS WHEN DESCRIBED BY FUNCTION, CHOICE OF FOUR

RL.C.46

Now your child is ready to select objects when they are described not by name, but by the purpose for which they are used. This exercise will help your child to learn relationships between objects and action words. It will also teach her to respond to a different kind of direction, isolating the most important words from a long and complicated sentence.

At Macquarie we have found that this is a favourite activity for many children, as it involves lots of interesting doing as well as listening.

In order to show small steps of progress, this task has been divided into three in the D.S.I. The children receive a *plus* when they can select two of four objects presented, then another when they can select four of six and one more when they can select all six. The three items, RL.C.46, 47 and 48, should be seen as a continuum.

You can use any objects that can be described in terms of what they do, or what they are for.

Here are some suggestions — we also give the question that could be asked for each object:

- Spoon — 'Which one do we eat with?'
- Cup — 'Which one do we drink with?'
- Ball — 'Which one do we throw (or catch or bounce)?'
- Book — 'Which one do we read?'
- Knife (or scissors) — 'Which one do we cut with?'
- Sock (or shoe) — 'Which one do we wear on our foot?'
- Paintbrush — 'Which one do we paint with?'
- Toothbrush — 'Which one do we clean our teeth with?'
- Hat — 'Which one do we wear on our head?'
- Whistle — 'Which one do we blow?'

Choose any items that your child is familiar with, or that you feel it would be useful for your child to know. Pictures could be used for assessment purposes, but for teaching purposes it is best to use either the real objects or toy miniatures.

How to Assess

Materials: Four functional objects known to your child.

Method: Place the objects on the table in front of your child. You can name them if you wish.

For each object, ask a 'which one' question, like those suggested above. If your child selects an object correctly, test it again a few minutes later, so that you can be sure your child has not made a lucky guess.

Score *plus* if your child selects at least two objects, in two tries for each object. If your child selects more than two of the objects, assess her now on the next item in this sequence: RL.C.47.

How to Teach

Demonstrate and talk about the use of each item at the start of each teaching session, and at all opportunities during the day. Let your child have a turn at using each item too.

Use the same techniques for helping your child to select the correct item as have been used throughout this sequence (refer to RL.C.20).

Sometimes it is necessary to reduce the number of choices, building up gradually from a choice of just two objects.

Playtime and Round-the-house Activities

This is just as important as the more structured work you do in your special teaching session. When you encounter functional objects during the day, talk about what they do as well as what they are. Place special emphasis on the objects you have selected for your objective. It may help to place extra examples of these in your child's play area. Show your child different examples of the objects you have chosen — she needs to know that all cups are for drinking, whether they are big or little, red or blue, glass or plastic, plain or patterned.

Remembering and Extending

Once your child can select at least two of the four objects you can increase the number of alternatives to six, as in the following items in this sequence.

POINTS TO FOUR OBJECTS WHEN DESCRIBED BY FUNCTION, CHOICE OF FOUR

RL.C.47

POINTS TO SIX OBJECTS WHEN DESCRIBED BY FUNCTION, CHOICE OF SIX

RL.C.48

These two items extend RL.C.46, in which the child was required to select two objects from a choice of four, when described by their function.

Using six objects, assess as in RL.C.46, scoring *plus* as follows:

- If your child selects four or five of the six objects, score *plus* for RL.C.47.
- If your child selects all six items, score *plus* for RL.C.47 and RL.C.48.

Teach as in RL.C.46, presenting a choice of six objects.

Once your child can select six items when they are described by their functions, it will probably be unnecessary to teach further examples in special teaching sessions. But do keep including new examples in your round-the-house activities, and check from time to time that she can select these new objects when they are presented together in groups.

This activity provides a useful background to the teaching of action words and phrases in a child's expressive language, or communication, program.

When your child can say the necessary action words or phrases, she will be able to tell how objects are used when asked 'What do you do with a . . .?'

SHOWN FIVE DIFFERENT FOOD ITEMS, SELECTS THREE WHEN NAMED

RL.C.49

SHOWN FIVE DIFFERENT ANIMALS, SELECTS THREE WHEN NAMED

RL.C.50

SHOWN FIVE DIFFERENT FURNITURE ITEMS, SELECTS THREE WHEN NAMED

RL.C.51

These three items, although assessed and taught separately, have much in common, so we will discuss them as a group.

When small children are learning to talk, they tend to generalise from the particular to the general. Hence we often find children to whom all four-legged animals are 'doggies', all fruit 'apples' and so on. But by this level of development, a child should be starting to differentiate between such 'same-but-different' objects.

Materials can consist of the real objects (where practical), realistic toys or pictures.

For food items: Select five food items that are familiar to your child. Avoid items that your child sees as special treats, such as lollies or ice-cream, as she may not associate these with 'ordinary' food at all!

For animals: Select five four-legged animals, such as a horse, a cow, a dog, a pig and a cat.

For furniture items: Select five familiar furniture items, such as a bed, a chair, a table, a cupboard and a TV.

How to Assess

Assess each category separately, in turn.

Materials: For each category, have five objects or pictures, as described above.

Method: Put the objects or pictures in front of your child. Say 'Point to the . . .'. Continue until each item has been tested twice.

Score *plus* for a category if your child selects at least three out of the five items in two tries per item.

How to Teach

This skill can be taught in the same way as earlier object selection skills (beginning at RL.C.20).

Many children will learn this skill without special teaching sessions, if an effort is made to teach the names of things as natural opportunities arise.

Playtime and Round-the-house Activities

Even if your child has scored *plus* in assessment, it is worth keeping in mind that 'now' is a good time to start extending your child's vocabulary to a finer level of detail. Even if she is not yet talking, you can aim to increase the range of words that she understands. Use the general words as well as the particular ones: 'Look at all the animals. There are pigs and horses and cows, and sheep.' Or: 'I'm dusting the furniture. First the table . . . now the piano. You dust the coffee table.' And so on.

Remember to give your child plenty of opportunities to show you that she understands, by selecting objects or following simple directions.

Remembering and Extending

Other categories to think about are parts of plants, birds (duck, hen, etc.), parts of houses (floor, walls, roof, etc.) and insects. There may well be others that are particular to your environment or occupation.

We will talk about this skill again at RL.C.71 to 74.

RESPONDS TO 'GIVE ME . . . AND . . .', CHOICE OF FOUR OBJECTS

RL.C.52

The important word here is 'and'. Instead of naming just one object, you will now name two, and your child must remember and give you both. When your child masters this skill, she will have taken a big step forward.

This skill is a prerequisite to RL.D.42 and all the skills which follow it (that is, two-part directions).

How to Assess

Materials: Four objects known to child (say, dog, cup, spoon and ball).

Method: Put the objects on the table in front of your child. Say 'Give me the . . . and the . . .'. Give five tries, naming several different combinations of objects. Do not give any extra hints or reminders. Make sure that your child listens to all the direction before she begins to select the objects.

Score *plus* if your child follows your direction, giving you both objects you asked for, in at least four out of five tries.

How to Teach

Because this is something quite new, it often requires intensive teaching.

You will start by giving a lot of help, and reduce it gradually.

Remember that good attending is essential to this skill.

To begin with, give your direction and then take your child's hands and guide her to pick up both objects. Say 'Look, you've got dog *and* ball'. You do the giving from time to time. Say: 'I'll give you spoon *and* cup. You've got spoon and cup.'

When you have repeated this procedure several times, try again without guiding your child's hands. If she gives you just one of the objects you named, say 'dog and . . .', giving her the chance to remember the second item. If she does not remember, repeat the entire direction: 'Give me dog and ball.'

If your child gives you two objects, but they are not the ones you named, replace the objects without comment and say: 'Listen hard. Give me dog and ball.'

Once your child is succeeding regularly with the amount of help described above, make any reminders you give more general — 'Have you finished?' or 'What did I ask for?' If she has forgotten, put all the objects down again and repeat the original direction.

You can vary the exercise by putting a large bowl or bucket on the table and saying 'Put dog and ball in'. You may think of other variations.

You can use different sets of objects each day — any familiar objects will do.

Continue teaching until your child follows your direction in at least four tries out of five on two consecutive days.

Playtime and Round-the-house Activities

See RL.C.53.

Remembering and Extending

See RL.C.53.

RESPONDS TO 'BRING ME . . . AND . . .', FROM ANYWHERE IN THE ROOM

RL.C.53

Practising in a natural environment is important for most of the skills in this program, but it is so important for this skill that we list it separately.

Your structured work with sets of four objects was a preparation for the practical skill of following directions around the house.

If your child is walking, and has reached this level in this sequence, she can probably already bring things to you if you name them singly — 'Find your Teddy' or 'Bring me my shoe, please, darling'. Now she can learn to follow a direction with two parts, such as 'We need your hat and shoes' or 'Can you get me a biscuit and some cheese?'

Note that while 'Bring me' is the basic direction used, there are many possible variations. The important thing is that the child is asked to do the same thing with both objects.

If your child is not mobile, you can extend the skill she acquired in RL.C.52 by offering her a wider choice of objects and/or positioning her where she can pass you objects that you need.

How to Assess

Method: This skill must be assessed in the home or in a classroom familiar to the child.

Using objects known to the child and accessible to her, say: 'Bring me the . . . and the . . .' Give three tries, naming different combinations of objects. You can spread your three tries out over a day, if you wish. Do not give any extra hints or reminders. Make sure that your child listens to all the direction before she goes off to find the objects.

Score *plus* if your child follows your direction in at least two of the three tries.

How to Teach

Start by naming pairs of objects that are often used together, such as shoes and socks, plate and spoon, bucket and spade.

Initially you may need to go with your child to help her find both objects. Try getting somebody else in the room to give the direction, and you help your child to find the objects and take them back to the asker.

When your child shows that she is less dependent on your presence, sit back and let her go by herself, giving the kind of reminders described in RL.C.52 when necessary.

Your child might enjoy playing a shopping game. Give her a basket and a shopping list, on which you have drawn simple pictures of two objects which she is to 'buy'. Once she has mastered the skill, she could go shopping without a list, and/or with a longer list.

Remembering and Extending
Once your child has mastered this skill you will find all sorts of ways to help her practise it. It will be extended in the last few skills of Sequence RL.D.

POINTS TO 13 BODY PARTS

RL.C.67

Using any 13 body parts, including the 10 that were learned earlier in the sequence, assess and teach as for RL.C.25.

POINTS TO 16 BODY PARTS

RL.C.68

Using any 16 body parts, including the 13 that were learned earlier in the sequence, assess and teach as for RL.C.25.

SELECTS A BOY AND A GIRL, WHEN SHOWN PICTURES OF BOTH

RL.C.69

At about this stage, children learn to distinguish between boys and girls without relying solely on stereotyped notions of hair style or clothing. You have probably been talking to your child about boys and girls for some time, as this is one of the many things that parents teach naturally.

If your child does not score *plus* at assessment, you can give extra help by following the same procedure used for selecting pictures at RL.C.34.

It is most important to use a wide variety of examples, and not only those which show girls with pigtails, ribbons and dresses.

Department store catalogues and magazine advertisements are good sources of pictures, though these do tend to conform to the stereotypes.

How to Assess
Materials: Three pictures of girls and three pictures of boys.

Method: Place one picture of a girl and one picture of a boy on the table. Say 'Point to the boy (or girl)'. Repeat for the other sex. Present the next set of pictures, reversing the position of the boy and the girl. Then present the third set. You will have given three tries each for 'boy' and 'girl'.

Score *plus* if your child correctly points to the boy in two out of three tries, and the girl in two out of three tries.

SELECTS A MAN AND A WOMAN, WHEN SHOWN PICTURES OF BOTH

RL.C.70

Assess as for RL.C.69, and teach, if necessary, as for RL.C.34.

SELECTS OBJECTS ACCORDING TO CATEGORY — FOOD

RL.C.71

SELECTS OBJECTS ACCORDING TO CATEGORY — ANIMALS

RL.C.72

SELECTS OBJECTS ACCORDING TO CATEGORY — CLOTHES

RL.C.73

SELECTS OBJECTS ACCORDING TO CATEGORY — FURNITURE

RL.C.74

The last four items in this sequence continue the notion of categories, or groups of related objects, begun in RL.C.49 to 51.

In the earlier activities, the child was asked to differentiate between members of a category when they were given their individual names. Now she is given the name of the category itself, and asked to select items which belong to that group.

The categories most commonly used for this activity are food, animals, clothing and furniture. Other categories can be substituted, depending on what your child is interested in and familiar with.

For materials, you can use objects (such as realistic toys) or pictures pasted or drawn onto a large piece of cardboard. Choose four categories, and find four examples of each — for example, four food items, four different toy animals, four different pieces of doll's clothing, and four pieces of doll's house furniture. If, following assessment, you find the need to teach this skill, look for extra examples of each category so that you can vary your materials. These four items (RL.C.71, 72, 73 and 74) can all be assessed together.

How to Assess

Materials: Four examples of four categories, as described above.

Method: Place the objects, in random order, on the table. Say 'Show me all the ones which are food'. If your child stops before she points to all the food items, say 'Can you find some more food?' Repeat for the remaining categories, giving no more that one reminder per category.

Score *plus* for RL.C.71 if your child selects at least three food items.

Score *plus* for RL.C.72 if your child selects at least three animals.

Score *plus* for RL.C.73 if your child selects at least three articles of clothing.

Score *plus* for RL.C.74 if your child selects at least three furniture items.

How to Teach

If your child scores *plus* on at least two of the categories, you can begin working with all four categories at once. If she does not score at all, or can select the members of only one of the categories, start with just two categories and build up gradually to four.

Begin by asking your child to match the members of the different categories. Place large dishes on the table, with an example of one category in each. Select an item for matching, and say: 'This is clothes. Put clothes with clothes.'

When the matching is completed, and all the objects are grouped together in their dishes, ask your child to select the dishes. Say 'Point to the dish of clothes/animals/furniture/food'.

Once your child can select the categories you name when they are already grouped together, you can move on to the next step. Spread all the objects on the table, and place just one dish in the middle. Choose a category, and place one example of that category in the dish. Say: 'I'm putting an animal in the dish. You put more animals in.' Repeat for all categories, giving extra help as necessary.

When your child can do this without help, stop putting an example in the dish. Point to the empty dish and say 'Put all the animals in the dish'. Repeat for all categories. Once your child can do this, it is a small step to pointing to all members of a category in turn, as described under How to Assess.

Playtime and Round-the-house Activities

One obvious way to practise this skill is at tidying-up time! Ask your child to put all her toys in the box, and all her clothes in the clothes basket.

Continue to use the names of general categories, as well as individual objects, as opportunities arise.

Remembering and Extending

You can extend this skill to other categories that are important to your child's world.

If your child will be going to school soon, this activity adapts well to a pencil-and-paper exercise. Draw a range of objects on a piece of paper, name a category and ask your child to circle all the members of that category.

There are, of course, many ways to categorise objects. You will find some of these ways (colour, size, shape) covered elsewhere in this program. Things can also be categorised by the materials they are made of, when, where and how they are used, and so on. As you help your child to explore the things around her, aim to show her the similarities between things that interest her, as well as the differences.

CHAPTER 4

RL.D: Responding to Directions Involving Action Words

In Sequence RL.C, the child learns to choose between objects and pictures. Objects will be used in this sequence, too, but here the emphasis is on action words and phrases. The action words that the child learns through these activities will help her to follow directions in her daily life, give her the means to understand the conversation of others and, most importantly, give her a sound basis for using such words and phrases in her own speech.

The skills in this sequence begin at the 18 months' level of ability. By this stage, the child will already understand simple action directions such as 'look', 'take', 'point' or 'give'. If you are in doubt about your child's understanding of these words, look at Sequence RL.B.

This sequence introduces new action words and, at the same time, teaches the child to follow increasingly complicated directions. For most skills, we will describe teaching activities that can be used in special teaching sessions at a table. Many children find initial learning easier in a setting where their entire attention can be directed to the crucial words and actions. But these structured activities should be seen only as a starting point. Teaching and learning must also occur in the environments in which these skills will normally be used. You will find some suggestions for this under Playtime and Round-the-house Activities, but trust your own ideas too.

Where objects are involved, choose objects that your child knows well — perhaps from the activities in Sequence RL.C. Where the child must choose between objects, as well as demonstrating actions, make sure that she has already learned to select from the number of objects specified. Your D.S.I. will help you to see the way in which Sequences RL.C and RL.D interrelate.

Below we list all the skills in this sequence.

18 months to 2 years

29. Given one object, carries out two different actions when asked.
30. Given one object, carries out three different actions when asked.

2 to 3 years

38. Demonstrates 10 action words.
39. Follows two-word directions, choice of two objects and three actions.
40. Follows two-word directions, choice of three objects and four actions.
41. Follows two-word directions, choice of four objects and four actions.
42. Follows two-word directions involving two actions and two objects within each direction.

3 to 4 years

65. Follows directions involving two actions and two objects within each direction, anywhere in the room.
66. Follows directions involving three actions and three objects within each direction, anywhere in the room.

GIVEN ONE OBJECT, CARRIES OUT TWO DIFFERENT ACTIONS WHEN ASKED

RL.D.29

The emphasis in this sequence is on action words. The meaning of action words can be highlighted by performing different actions with the same object. When you give your child directions using this object, one word of your direction (the name of the object) will remain the same, but the other word (the action word) will change. To follow your directions, your child must listen for, and respond to, the key word within your phrase.

Think first about the action words that are, or will be, part of your child's play and other daily activities. Think about words she is likely to want to use herself. There are no set rules about what such actions words should be, but from a practical point of view they must have meanings that she can demonstrate, either through her own movements or with toys.

At Macquarie, the teachers often choose to use dolls and animal toys in this exercise and those that follow. The actions taught can then be the sorts of things that dolls and animals can do — at least within the imagination of a child. Actions used frequently include 'kiss', 'jump', 'pat', 'sleep' and 'sit'.

This approach has three advantages. First, teaching can take place with small toys at a table, or larger ones during imaginative play. Second, many children are able to demonstrate such actions themselves, with their own bodies. Third, such action words reflect important aspects of the child's daily life — aspects that she will want to talk about.

If this approach does not work for you (perhaps because your child does not like dolls or cuddly toys), you can use action words that can be carried out with any objects (cars, blocks, spoons, etc.) such as 'blow', 'give', 'point' and 'push'. But dolls are so useful as teaching aids, and in the development of imaginative play, that it is worth spending time helping your child to enjoy them. This applies to boys just as much as to girls!

To begin with, just two action words are chosen. At Macquarie, the teachers and parents usually choose two from 'kiss', 'jump', 'pat' and 'cuddle'.

How to Assess

Materials: One object — usually a doll or cuddly toy (see notes above).

Method: Choose two action words that you expect your child to know. Let's say you choose 'kiss' and 'jump'. Say to your child 'Kiss Dolly'. Once she has responded, say 'Jump Dolly'. Then say 'Jump Dolly' again. Continue until you have used each action word three times in a random order.

Score *plus* if your child performs the specified action with the doll or other object, at least twice for each action.

How to Teach

Choose actions that you expect your child to enjoy. Teach by demonstration, together with verbal information: 'Look, I can jump Dolly. Jump, jump. You jump Dolly.' Give physical help if necessary, phasing it out as soon as possible.

Once your child is imitating you readily, try giving just the direction, without a demonstration, and use demonstrations only if errors are made.

It is very important that your child is listening and attending during these teaching sessions. Once you are sure that your child does know the word, respond to errors by saying 'Listen carefully . . . JUMP Dolly'.

Follow the same procedure for the other action words that you are teaching, alternating them in a random order.

Vary the objects that you use, so that your child does not learn that jumping, kissing or whatever is an action that applies only to a particular toy.

Playtime and Round-the-house Activities

Practise at playtime with all kinds of toys. You and your child can do the actions too. Look for opportunities to discuss the actions you are teaching whenever they arise in picture books, when watching other children play, on television or wherever!

Remembering and Extending

Go straight on to RL.D.30.

GIVEN ONE OBJECT, CARRIES OUT THREE DIFFERENT ACTIONS WHEN ASKED

RL.D.30

This exercise is a direct extension of RL.D.29, except that now a third action is added to the two already known.

If you would like to include 'sit' or 'sleep', it helps to have a little chair or bed from a set of doll's house furniture. If you are teaching at a table, this prop should be left on the table while you give all your directions — if you produce it only when it is needed your child will know what you want her to do without listening to your direction.

Assess, teach and practise during play as for RL.D.29.

DEMONSTRATES 10 ACTION WORDS

RL.D.38

The three action words taught in RL.D.30, and those taught in Sequence RL.B, form the foundation on which the child learns many, many more. At the 2-year-old level of development, the child can be expected to understand at least 10 action words, and to be able to demonstrate them, either with her own body or with a doll.

How to Assess

Materials: Dolls or other toys.

Method: Ask your child to demonstrate 10 different action words (one at a time), either with a doll (or other toy) or with her own body, or a combination of the two. You can spread your assessment over a couple of sessions, if you choose.

The 10 action words can be any that the child might know, but could include 'kiss', 'jump', 'sit', 'sleep', 'cuddle', 'blow', 'push', 'point', 'give', 'put', 'wash', 'fall down' and so on.

When assessing action words that require props, such as 'brush', make sure that the props are available throughout the assessment session. If you hand them to your child at the appropriate time, you will not know whether she has understood the action word or is responding to the object you have given her.

Score *plus* if your child demonstrates at least 10 action words.

How to Teach

You may find that it is not necessary to teach all 10 words within structured teaching sessions. Once your child has learned to respond to a few action words, she may learn others easily during playtime and routine activities.

Keep in mind that the teaching methods described in RL.D.29 can be used during play, as well as in structured teaching sessions.

Playtime and Round-the-house Activities

Action words should now be a major feature of your conversation with your child, in everything you do together. If your child has started to talk, you will be encouraging her to say them as well, using the methods described in Book 3, Chapter 3.

Remembering and Extending

This sequence now moves on to more complex directions, but you can, of course, go on teaching more action words — the more the better!

FOLLOWS TWO-WORD DIRECTIONS, CHOICE OF TWO OBJECTS AND THREE ACTIONS

RL.D.39

In the preceding steps, the child has learned to respond to one word within a two-word phrase. Although the action word changed from direction to direction, the name of the object always remained the same — at least within any one teaching session.

From this point on, the object named will vary, as well as the action word. The child learns to listen and respond to both words within each direction.

How to Assess

Materials: Two small toys well known to the child. If two dolls are used, they should have different names. It is usually preferable to use two quite different toys, such as Dolly and Puppy, or Teddy and Cow.

Method: Put the two toys on the table. Using action words taught in RL.D.28, 29 and 30, give your child a direction involving one of the objects and one of the actions. Give five such directions in all. Use each action word at least once.

As an example, let's say your objects are Dolly and Puppy, and your actions are jump, pat and kiss. Your directions might be:

'Jump Dolly.'
'Kiss Puppy.'
'Pat Puppy.'
'Pat Dolly.'
'Kiss Dolly.'

Score *plus* if your child correctly follows at least four of your five directions, including at least one correct respond to each of the three action words.

How to Teach

Make sure your child is looking at you, and give your direction clearly and slowly.

If your child moves towards the wrong object, regain her attention and give the whole direction again. If a further error occurs, demonstrate, saying: 'Look, I kiss Dolly. You kiss Dolly.'

Note that if you divide the direction into two ('Find *Dolly* . . . now *kiss* Dolly.') you are really working at the level of RL.D.30. It is most important to present both words as part of the same phrase.

Playtime and Round-the-house Activities

As with RL.D.29, this activity can be practised at playtime with all kinds of dolls and cuddly toys.

Remembering and Extending

This skill is directly extended by RL.D.40.

FOLLOWS TWO-WORD DIRECTIONS, CHOICE OF THREE OBJECTS AND FOUR ACTIONS

RL.D.40

This activity continues on from RL.D.39, increasing the range of choices open to the child.

How to Assess

Materials: Three small toys well known to the child. Refer to RL.D.39.

Method: Put the three toys on the table. Using action words taught in RL.D.29, 30 and 38, give your child a direction involving one of the objects and one of the actions. Give five such directions, using each of the four action words at least once.

As an example, let's say your objects are Dolly, Puppy and Cow, and your actions are jump, pat, kiss and cuddle. Your directions might be:

'Jump Dolly.'
'Kiss Puppy.'
'Jump Cow.'
'Cuddle Puppy.'
'Pat Cow.'

If you are using actions which require props, such as 'sleep' or 'sit', put your chair, bed or whatever on the table but keep it slightly to one side, away from your three dolls and/or animals, so that it doesn't complicate your child's choice of object.

How to Teach

Teach as for RL.D.39.

Playtime and Round-the-house Activities

This skill is directly extended by RL.D.41.

FOLLOWS TWO-WORD DIRECTIONS, CHOICE OF FOUR OBJECTS AND FOUR ACTIONS

RL.D.41

In this activity, the child uses the same listening and responding skills she has been practising earlier in this sequence, but the range of options open to her is increased still further.

Assess and teach as for RL.D.40 giving a choice of four objects and using four action words.

Remembering and Extending

Once your child has mastered this skill, she has a sound basis for following simple one-step directions around the house. All the listening practice she has done so far in this sequence has been a preparation for following directions as part of her everyday life. Now you know that she can choose between a range of options on the basis of what you say to her. Round-the-house situations will, of course, present more distractions — there are hundreds of items in any room, not just four. But if you stick to objects and actions which are familiar to your child, you can expect her to respond.

It is just as important as it was in the teaching sessions to gain your child's attention first. If she goes off on the wrong track, or gets distracted, regain her attention and repeat the whole direction. Don't step in with extra help unless you are sure that she really listened first.

Your directions need not now be confined to the four action words or objects you used to teach this skill. Indeed, one aim should be to increase the range of action words she knows. No need to stick rigidly to two-word phrases — longer phrases can be used as long as they have one central idea, and require only one action. You can try directions like 'Give this to Daddy', 'Brush Dolly's hair', 'Bring me your towel', 'Take that outside', 'Wash your knees'.

Your child (boy or girl!) will now be ready to enjoy extended sessions of doll play with props such as tea-sets, real kitchen utensils, doll's beds (or boxes) and grooming aids. This is one of the best ways to practise known action words, and teach new ones. You can practise identifying objects by their function (RL.C.46–48) at the same time, like this:

Parent: Monkey wants to eat.
Child: (no response)
Parent: What do we eat with?
Child: (takes a spoon)
Parent: We eat with a spoon! Can Monkey eat?
Child: (feeds Monkey)
Parent: Mmmmm. He likes it. Now, wipe his face . . .

You could also try using imaginary props and miming actions.

Think about the action words you can teach with other toys too. You can use cars, buses and trains (push, go, stop), balls (throw, roll, bounce, kick), containers (open, shut, shake, push) and so on. Remember to build up to a choice of objects, as well as actions, with each new action word you teach.

FOLLOWS TWO-WORD DIRECTIONS INVOLVING TWO ACTIONS AND TWO OBJECTS WITHIN EACH DIRECTION

RL.D.42

In RL.C.52 the child shows that she can follow directions which have two parts. When given a choice of four objects, she gives you two when asked 'Give me the . . . and the . . .'.

In this activity she will learn to follow directions which involve two different actions, as well as two different objects. It follows that you should wait until your child has mastered RL.C.52 before starting this new activity.

Directions of the form 'Do this and then do that' are a big step forward from simple one-step directions. It is important the child learns to follow these directions, because they occur so often in everyday life. We are using such two-step directions when we say 'Get your school bag and wait at the door' or 'Take off your shoes and put on your slippers' or 'Kiss Daddy goodnight and climb into bed'.

This activity (RL.D.42) teaches the child to follow such directions at a table or in a quiet play setting away from distractions. The next activity in this sequence (RL.D.65) extends this skill to the 'real' round-the-house world.

How to Assess

Materials: Four objects known to the child.

Method: The actions you use will depend on the objects you have chosen. If your objects are 'characters' such as Dolly, Puppy, Teddy and Cow, you will be able to use actions such as jump, pat, sleep and sit. If your objects are 'inanimate', such as block, car, spoon and cup, choose actions such as push, blow, give and take. Be guided in your choice by what your child has learned earlier in this sequence.

Each direction you give will involve two of the four objects, and you will direct your child to do something different with each object, linking the two actions with 'and'. Here are some examples:

'Sit Dolly and jump Teddy.'
'Sleep Cow and pat Dolly.'
'Push block and give me car.'
'Blow the cup and take the spoon.'

Give five such directions. Give your child plenty of time to respond, but don't help her halfway through — or, if you do, don't count that try towards a *plus* score.

Score *plus* if your child follows at least four out of your five two-step directions.

How to Teach

It is essential that your child is looking at you, and listening to what you say, before you give your direction.

Demonstrate first, describing what you are doing. 'Look, I can jump Dolly AND kiss Teddy.'

If your child carries out the first step and then gets stuck, replace the first object without comment, regain your child's attention and repeat the whole direction.

If she gets stuck again this time, remind her that there is something else to follow by saying '*And* . . .???' or 'Jump Dolly *AND* . . .???'.

If she still does not remember the second part of your direction, replace all objects, regain her attention, repeat the whole direction and help her through each step.

Dividing your direction in two ('Jump Dolly . . . Good, now kiss Teddy') will not help your child learn this skill. This gives practice at following one-step directions, but does not teach the child to remember two steps.

Playtime and Round-the-house Activities

In the early stages of learning this skill, try to avoid situations which involve too many distractions. But, keeping this in mind, there is no reason why you can't practise in the doll corner and elsewhere. In RL.D.65, we will talk about ways to help your child use this skill in everyday situations.

Remembering and Extending

This skill is directly extended by RL.D.65.

FOLLOWS DIRECTIONS INVOLVING TWO ACTIONS AND TWO OBJECTS WITHIN EACH DIRECTION, ANYWHERE IN THE ROOM

RL.D.65

Now that the child can follow two-step directions in a distraction-free setting, you can help her to use this skill where it matters most — during normal daily activities around the home.

How to Assess

Method: In a room familiar to your child, give her a direction which involves two objects and two actions. Choose actions which do not always and inevitably follow each other, so that you can be sure that your child is really listening and is not just following a well-known routine.

Give three such directions. They may be given at different times, or even in different rooms. Here are some suggestions:

'Shut the door and bring me a book.'
'Find a car and sit on the sofa.'
'Put on your hat and cuddle Dolly.'
'Give Suzie a biscuit and bring me a spoon.'

Score *plus* if your child follows at least two out of three directions.

How to Teach

Start by giving directions which do go quite naturally together. If you listen to the directions you give your child during the day, you may well find that the same group of directions occurs at much the same time each day, particularly during the more routine activities such as eating, bathing, dressing and going to bed. Instead of giving these directions one by one, join them together, in pairs, like this:

'Wash your hands and clean your teeth.'
'Get down from the table now and put your plate in the sink.'
'Open the door for Spot and give him a dog biscuit.'
'Kiss Teddy goodnight and climb under the blankets.'
'Find your new puzzle and sit up at the table.'

Once your child can follow directions such as these, you can start to introduce new directions which are not tied so closely to familiar routines.

A word of caution: avoid giving your child two-step directions unless you have the time to follow them through if your child gets lost — repeating the whole direction and helping your child through both steps if necessary. If you always remind your child of the second step, without going back over both of them, your child will soon learn that she doesn't need to attend to what you say.

Playtime and Round-the-house Activities

The notes above relate to very practical directions, but of course you can involve two-step directions in play too. Why not introduce them into imaginative games, such as climbing into a carton and being a jack-in-the-box, or putting on a postman's hat and taking a letter to Grandpa, or hiding in the monster's cave and jumping out at Daddy.

Remembering and Extending

RL.D.66 introduces three-step directions. But most of the directions that you will want or need to use in the preschool years are two-step directions, so it is well worthwhile continuing to extend your child's skills at this level. You can introduce new action words into your directions, and add an extra challenge by asking her to do one thing in one room, and something different in another room. You can begin to give her two-step directions when are many distractions around — such as a room full of busy people. If your child goes to preschool, her teacher will find many opportunities to extend her direction-following skills. Ask the preschool staff to observe whether or not she will follow directions given to the whole group, as well as directions given on an individual basis.

FOLLOWS DIRECTIONS INVOLVING THREE ACTIONS AND THREE OBJECTS WITHIN EACH DIRECTION, ANYWHERE IN THE ROOM

RL.D.66

This activity is excellent for developing listening skills and memory.

Assess and teach for RL.D.65, giving directions of the form 'Do this, then do that and then do the other'. Involve three different actions and three different objects in each direction.

Note that it is usually not important that the child carries out the actions in the same order that you name them, though it is wise to stick to this order when you are helping her.

Extend this skill to round-the-house and play situations, as in RL.D.65.

If opportunities to give three-step directions do not arise naturally, put time aside to play remembering games with your child, offering the challenge of three actions to remember and follow. This is even more fun if other children take turns to remember too.

CHAPTER 5

RL.E: Responding to Directions Involving Attribute Words

Attribute words are words which tell us more about an object or an action. Attribute words describe objects and actions.

Attribute words help us to give colour and life to our expressive language and help us to be more precise in the way we talk about things. Understanding them prepares the child to use them in her own speech, and also helps her to respond more accurately to the conversation of others.

To progress through this sequence, your child need not be able to say the words. She shows that she understands the words by following directions involving attributes. Usually, she is asked to choose between alternatives on the basis of a particular attribute — for instance, choosing the big one or choosing the rough one.

If your child is talking, encourage her to say the words, as well as following the directions. You will find suggestions for helping her to use such words in her communications with others in Book 3, Chapter 3.

Below we list all the skills in this sequence.

2 to 3 years

54. Selects *big*, choice of big and little.
55. Selects *little*, choice of big and little.
56. Selects on basis of size, given two pairs of objects.

3 to 4 years

75. Selects *long* and *short*.
76. Selects *hard* and *soft*.
77. Selects *rough* and *smooth*.
78. Selects *open* and *shut*.
79. Answers or demonstrates: 'What do you do when you are *cold/tired/hungry?*'
80. Selects members of a group that are *the same*.
81. Selects the member of a group that is *different*.
82. Selects or demonstrates *happy*, *sad*, *angry*.
83. Selects *bigger* and *smaller*.
84. Selects *first* and *last*.

SELECTS *BIG*, CHOICE OF BIG AND LITTLE

RL.E.54

SELECTS *LITTLE*, CHOICE OF BIG AND LITTLE

RL.E.55

These two attribute words can be assessed and taught together.

You can use all kinds of materials to teach this skill — the more variety the better! You will work with pairs of objects, or pictures, that are the same (or similar) in all respects expect for size. They should be markedly different in size, particularly in the early stages of learning.

If your child enjoys working with pictures, cut pieces of cardboard and draw big and little versions of the same object on each. Make sure that the big one is sometimes on the left and sometimes on the right. In addition, make a collection of objects — big and little toy farm animals, teddies, spoons, blocks, cars, balls, stones, shoes and so on.

How to Assess

Materials: Three pairs of objects, as described above.

Method: Place one pair of objects on the table. Let's say you choose spoons. Say 'Give me the big spoon'. Replace the spoon — not necessarily in the same position. Say 'Give me the little spoon'.

Repeat with the other two pairs of objects. Vary the order in which you ask for big and little, and the relative position of the two sizes on the table.

Score *plus* for RL.E.54 in your child selects the big object correctly in at least two of the three tries.

Score *plus* for RL.E.55 if your child selects the little object correctly in at least two of the three tries.

How to Teach

Work on both big and little, even if your child scored *plus* for one of them at assessment. You might give more time to practising the weaker concept.

Begin teaching by clearly identifying the objects to your child before asking her to select. Use heavy emphasis: 'Look, I've got a *BIG* car and a *LITTLE* car.' Let your child handle the objects or trace the pictures with a finger.

Ask your child to select one or the other, and reinforce her if she selects correctly — again, emphasising the key words: 'Terrific, you found the *BIG* one!'

If she moves towards the incorrect object or picture, intervene and bring her attention back to you, like this: 'Show me the *BIG* car . . . Look at Mummy' (perhaps taking the child's hand) 'where is the *BIG* one?' If she persists in the error, help her by pointing or guiding her hand, saying: 'Look, here's the big car. You take *BIG*.'

As your child gets the idea, you can reduce the amount of help you give, including your initial demonstration.

Vary the materials within and between teaching sessions.

If your child does not make progress with the approach described above, the Match-to-Sample game described in Book 2, Chapter 3, can be adapted to teach big and little. Use sets of identical big and little objects for matching, selecting with a sample and selecting. Do vary your materials if you teach the skill this way.

Playtime and Round-the-house Activities

All sorts of things come in big and little sizes — toys, pictures in books, household objects, animals and people. Use all the opportunities that come your way to talk about sizes.

Remembering and Extending

This skill is directly extended in RL.E.56.

SELECTS ON BASIS OF SIZE, GIVEN TWO PAIRS OF OBJECTS

RL.E.56

In this activity your child must listen not only to the size you specify, but to the object you name as well.

How to Assess

Materials: Two sets of big and little objects, for example big and little cups, big and little blocks.

Method: Place both sets of objects on the table. Say 'Point to (or give me, or take) the little cup'. Then say 'Point to the big block'. Give five such directions in all.

Score *plus* if your child selects the correct object in at least four out of five tries.

How to Teach

Use the same approach as that described for RL.E.54 and 55, using two pairs of objects at a time.

Emphasise both the size and the name of the object when you give your directions.

Vary the way you arrange the objects on the table and vary the materials you use.

Playtime and Round-the-house Activities

A tea-party offers much scope for practising this activity. Invite big and little Teddies, and big and little Dollies. Provide big and little cups, spoons and so on. You could even have big and little biscuits and big and little sandwiches!

Remembering and Extending

Once your child has mastered this skill, you can include size in the directions you give your child around the house. Instead of asking her to bring you a spoon, ask for a big spoon and so on.

This sequence now moves on to other attribute words, but big and little should be maintained with regular practice. You could now try some pairs of objects that are less markedly different in size.

SELECTS *LONG* AND *SHORT*

RL.E.75

Long and *short* are assessed, taught and practised in the same way as *big* and *little*.

Materials can include lengths of ribbon, pipe-cleaners, sticks, pieces of hose and so on. If you use illustrations, snakes, trains and hair can be added. You will think of more ideas. Whatever you use, encourage your child to feel or trace the different lengths.

Here is an idea for a 'long' and 'short' toy. Find a solid box with a lid. A plastic food-storage container is ideal if you can spare one. You will also need several pieces of ribbon, some very long (up to a metre or so) and some quite short.

Make small holes in your container. Make them in the base, not the lid. Knot one end of each piece of ribbon, thread it through a hole and knot the other end. Pull all the ribbons inside the container, so that only the knots are showing. Put on the lid, to keep the ribbons inside.

Your child will enjoy pulling the ribbons out through the holes, and you can talk about whether each one is long or short. Once she is selecting colours, you can involve colours in the game as well.

SELECTS *HARD* AND *SOFT*

RL.E.76

Children love to feel things, so learning about hard and soft can be great fun — a change from activities which rely mostly on looking.

Many children gravitate towards the soft object when asked to make a selection — perhaps because it is more interesting to touch, and perhaps we tend to comment more in everyday life when things feel soft. You can add interest to the concept of 'hard' with a touch of drama — knocking on hard surfaces with your knuckles, trying to push a finger in, banging your hand and saying 'ouch', and so on.

How to Assess

Materials: Four pairs of objects, each pair containing one hard item and one soft item. If possible, choose objects for each pair that are roughly the same colour and size.

Method: Place one set of objects in front of the child, and let her feel them. Say 'Which one is hard?' . . . 'Which one is soft?' Repeat with other pairs, varying the order in which you ask for hard and soft, and the position in which you place the objects on the table (don't always put the soft one on the left).

Score *plus* if your child selects the hard item in three out of four tries and the soft item in three out of four tries.

How to Teach

Use the same approach as that described for RL.E.54 and 55, preceding every direction by feeling the objects.

Note that your child may wish to feel the objects again before she follows your direction, so it may look as though she is going towards the wrong one. You will need to wait until she clearly indicates her choice. One way around this is to use the direction 'Put the soft (or hard) one in', using a box, bowl or bucket. Your child can then feel the objects as much as she likes and you can step in — with praise or assistance — when she puts one of the objects in the container.

Use a wide variety of materials when teaching this skill. There are different kinds and degrees of softness, and even hard things can be rough and smooth, heavy and light. Showing your child lots of examples will help her to focus on the crucial differences.

Playtime and Round-the-house Activities

Draw your child's attention to hardness and softness wherever they occur. This would be a good time to bring some of your child's baby toys back into circulation — her old soft balls and blocks will contrast well with her newer hard ones. Show her how dough changes from soft to hard when it is cooked in the oven — keep some dough uncooked to highlight the difference.

Remembering and Extending

Continue to practise hard and soft as you go on to teach other attribute words in this sequence.

SELECTS *ROUGH* AND *SMOOTH*

RL.E.77

Assess, teach and practise as for RL.E.76, again with emphasis on feeling, using objects with a distinct rough or smooth texture.

Don't forget to use Daddy's or Grandpa's cheeks as an example — before and after a shave!

SELECTS *OPEN* AND *SHUT*

RL.E.78

Materials for this activity may take a little more organising. Doll's house furniture is useful, but you will need two examples of each, or pieces with two doors or two drawers. Pictures of open and shut are easily drawn — you could try 'mouth open', 'mouth shut', 'eye open', 'eye shut', 'door open', 'door shut'. It is not advisable to use pictures exclusively, but they can be used to provide variety. Perhaps you have a jewellery box with little drawers, or a doll whose eyes can be moved separately.

In the notes below we will refer to doll's house furniture, but feel free to substitute the materials that are available to you.

How to Assess

Materials: Two doll's house cupboards, one with

door open, one with door shut, or similar. Other materials, for variety, if possible. Remember there must be a choice — shutting an open door when there is only one door does not really demonstrate an understanding of open and shut.
Method: Place the cupboards on the table, one with its door open and one with its door shut. Say to the child 'Open the door'. After the child has responded return the doors to their original positions, and say 'Shut the door'. Continue, varying the order of your directions, until four tries have been given for each word. Change materials from time to time if possible.

Score *plus* if your child opens the door when asked in three out of four tries and shuts the door when asked in three out of four tries.

How to Teach

In your special teaching sessions, use materials (such as those described above) which give your child the option to either open or shut. If you offer only one door or drawer at a time, your child will move it into the opposite position without necessarily attending to what you say.

Demonstrate the actions at the beginning of your session, then give a direction to open or shut. Step in with assistance if necessary, and continue teaching until assistance is no longer needed.

Playtime and Round-the-house Activities

Most opportunities to open and shut around the house will offer only one choice to the child, so they may not by themselves teach the child to distinguish between the words. Nevertheless, using such opportunities is important for strengthening and extending learning done in special sessions. Your child will enjoy opening and shutting her hands and eyes — and watching you do this. There is a well-known song which starts with opening and shutting hands:

Open, shut them,
Open, shut them,
Give a little clap.
Open, shut them,
Open, shut them,
Lay them in your lap.

Creep them, creep them,
Creep them, creep them,
Right up to your chin.
Open wide your little mouth . . .
But do not let them in!

Remembering and Extending

You will find many ways to help your child remember this skill. Perhaps you could tie it in to Fine Motor activities such as opening and shutting boxes and screw-top jars.

Your child will need to learn that *shut* means the same as *close*.

ANSWERS OR DEMONSTRATES: 'WHAT DO YOU DO WHEN YOU'RE *COLD/TIRED/HUNGRY*?'

RL.E.79

In this activity, we are concerned with bodily sensations. Those listed above are just a selection — you could also include 'hot', 'sick' or 'wet'. Emotional states such as 'happy', 'sad' and 'angry' are assessed and taught in RL.E.82.

The child who is talking can simply answer such questions, or tell her feelings without any questions being asked. The child who is not talking can learn gestures which communicate her understanding of the words, and her feelings or needs, to others.

How to Assess

Method: Ask your child each question in turn:

1. 'What do you do when you're cold?'
2. 'What do you do when you're tired?'
3. 'What do you do when you're hungry?'

To score *plus* your child should make an appropriate response to each of the questions.

- Your child has responded appropriately to 'What do you do when you're cold?' if:

a. She answers verbally and logically, for example: 'Put jumper on', 'jumper', 'Find radiator' or 'shiver'. Any logical response can be accepted — as long as you are sure your child has understood the question; *or*
b. She makes an appropriate gesture, such as shivering.

- Your child has responded appropriately to 'What do you do when you're tired?' if:

a. She answers verbally, for example: 'Go to bed', 'sleep', 'rest'; *or*
b. She makes a gesture which mimes sleeping.

- Your child has responded appropriately to 'What do you do when you're hungry?' if:

a. She answers verbally, for example: 'Eat hamburger', 'eat', 'dinner'; *or*
b. She makes a gesture which mimes eating.

How to Teach

If your child is talking, teach this skill as part of your normal conversation with your child, making the most of situations where your child really is cold, tired or hungry. If your child is not talking you can also involve these concepts in everyday life. But you might consider some more structured teaching as well.

Decide on the gesture that you will teach your child to express each word, and teach through demonstration. Always use a word or phrase as well, which describes what you are doing.

You could play a game with Dolly too. Put a variety of props on the table — some clothes or blankets, spoons or toy food items, a little bed. Say: 'Dolly's cold. What will she do?' If your child does not respond, help her by giving her more information. 'Dolly's cold. Look, she's shivering. She needs a . . .'

Playtime and Round-the-house Activities

Talk about what the cat does when she's tired, what the chooks need when they're hungry, how we can help Teddy when he's cold. Suggest role-play games in which your child plays Mother or Father and her/his puppets or dollies express how they feel. Interpret her requests for specific items in terms of the feelings that underly them — if she asks for a biscuit, say 'Oh, you're feeling hungry'.

Remembering and Extending

At the beginning of this item, we suggest some other terms that you could teach your child. You are sure to think of others. In time, you will be able to expect a response to more general questions, such as 'How are you feeling?'

SELECTS MEMBERS OF A GROUP THAT ARE *THE SAME*

RL.E.80

By this stage your child will have a concept of 'sameness', expressed through her ability to match like objects, pictures, colours and so on. The purpose of this exercise is to ensure that she understands the word 'same'. This skill is sometimes assessed and taught together with RL.E.81.

You can use sets of objects to assess and teach this skill, but at Macquarie, cards are generally used for convenience. We will describe the procedure with cards here, and you can substitute objects if you wish.

How to Assess

Materials: Four sets of three cards, each set showing two shapes or pictures that are the same and one that is different.

Method: Put two different cards from the first set on the table. Hold up the other card. Say 'Which one is the same?' Repeat with the three other sets of materials. Avoid putting the one that is the same in the same position each time.

Score *plus* if your child selects the shape that is the same as the one in your hand in three out of four tries.

How to Teach

To begin with, give your child the card and allow her to match it directly on to the matching card. After a little practice, ask her to point to, or give you, the one that is the same.

If an error is made, show her the sample card, and the one she has selected, and say, 'Are these the same? No, they're different. Look, these are the same.'

Playtime and Round-the-house Activities

Sorting the washing gives scope for practising this skill. Perhaps tidying out the toy cupboard would too. A child's version of the game Concentration contains sets that are the same — even ordinary playing cards can be used. Look for materials in your button jar, the cutlery drawer, the tool box.

Remembering and Extending

Worksheets where the child is asked to link with a pencil line things that are the same provide useful preparation for school work. Offering a wider range of choices, and/or a smaller degree of difference between the alternatives, will extend this skill. Pre-reading books available from educational bookshops may give you some ideas for activities, though some adaptation may be needed to suit the individual child.

SELECTS THE MEMBER OF A GROUP THAT IS *DIFFERENT*

RL.E.81

Apart from the general usefulness of the word 'different', it is a concept that is emphasised in the pre-reading programs of many schools.

This skill can be assessed and taught at the same time as RL.E.80 (selecting 'same') or it can be introduced once 'same' has been mastered.

Start by using the same materials as for RL.E.80, saying 'Which one is different?', and eliminating the matching step from the teaching process. For variety, make cards showing three identical pictures or shapes, and one different one, and say 'Point to the one which is different'. Or make a row of four objects, three the same and one different. Make sure you vary the position in which the different one is placed.

A child who can answer questions with 'yes' and 'no' can be shown two objects and asked 'Are these the same?' or 'Are these different?'

You can extend this skill by reducing the amount of difference between the pictures or objects you use.

SELECTS OR DEMONSTRATES *HAPPY, SAD, ANGRY*

RL.E.82

In RL.E.79, the child learned the attribute words that describe the physical feelings of coldness, tiredness and hunger. Here we are concerned with the words that describe emotional feelings. We concentrate on the words 'happy', 'sad' and 'angry', but of course there are many others, such as 'frightened', 'excited', 'lonely', 'cross' and 'pleased', that you could teach as well.

For the child who is talking, the ability to describe the way she feels will be of immense value — a value that we all recognise from our own experience. For the child who is not yet talking, understanding the words that describe feelings will help her to indicate when we are interpreting her feelings correctly and to be more aware of what is happening to people who are describing their feelings to her.

How to Assess

There are two ways to assess this skill — choose the one which best suits your child.

1. Ask your child 'What do you do when you feel happy?' or direct her to make a happy face. Repeat for 'sad' and 'angry'. Score *plus* if your child demonstrates all three feelings.

2. Find or draw pictures of people displaying each emotion. Have at least two sets of such pictures. Ask your child to point to the person who is happy/sad/angry. Repeat with alternative pictures. Score *plus* if your child selects each picture correctly at least twice.

SELECTS *BIGGER* AND *SMALLER*

RL.E.83

In this activity the child's concept of 'big' and 'little' (or small) is extended to include the relative terms 'bigger' and 'smaller'. Such relative terms are prominent in early number work at school.

How to Assess

Materials: Two sets of objects, each set having three similar objects of three different sizes. For example, you might have a small, medium and large doll and a small, medium and large car.

Method: Place one set of objects on the table in random order. Point to the middle-sized object and ask 'Which one is bigger than this?' Then ask 'Which one is smaller than this?'

Score *plus* if your child selects the correct object in at least four out of six tries.

How to Teach

At the start of your teaching session, place the middle-sized object on the table and name it — 'Look, I've got a dolly'.

Then say: 'Here's another dolly. This dolly is SMALLER ... And here's a dolly that is BIGGER.'

Ask the questions as described under How to Assess, guiding your child towards the correct item as in RL.C.54 and 55.

If your child does not make progress with this approach, you can help her by placing boxes or circles of cardboard of similar size to your big and small objects at either end of the table. Point to the middle-sized object and say 'Put the doll that is BIGGER than this in the BIGGER box'. Repeat for smaller. Phase out the boxes or circles when your child has mastered this step.

Playtime and Round-the-house Activities

Much of the teaching of this skill can be done in play, and 'pretending' games are ideal. Pretend to get a large doll ready for an outing. Have a range of props — small, middle-sized and large hats, scarves, bags and so on. Choose a middle-sized item (say, a hat) and say: 'Is this the right one for Dolly? No, she needs a bigger one.' You can emphasise the concept of 'smaller' by playing a similar game with a small doll. You could play at matching the right sizes of cups, plates and spoons to three dolls for different sizes at a tea-party. This will give you opportunities to talk about things that are 'middle sized', as well as 'bigger' and 'smaller'.

Such games require prior organisation, but you can also take advantage of situations that come up naturally — when playing with blocks, for instance, or when setting the table ('Baby needs a smaller spoon') or when shopping together ('Can you find a bigger pineapple?'). Natural comparisons occur in families, especially with brothers and sisters. 'Sally is bigger/smaller than you — her shoes are bigger/smaller. Her fingers are bigger/smaller' and so on.

Remembering and Extending

Other relative terms that your child could learn include 'longer' and 'shorter', 'harder' and 'softer' and 'rougher' and 'smoother'.

You can also introduce the terms 'biggest' and 'smallest'.

Note the relationship between this item and FM.H.104, where the child learns to arrange a set of blocks in order of size.

SELECTS *FIRST* AND LAST

RL.E.84

The terms 'first' and 'last' can be closely akin to location words — they can be used to talk about where things are. But they can be used in many other ways too, and it's a good idea to help the child see the broad applications of these terms right from the beginning.

These terms are perhaps used most often to describe people or objects that are progressing in a line towards a goal. This is the usage that is reflected in the assessment procedure below. You will need pictures of people or animals running or walking, all facing the same way. It helps if the goal is also shown in the picture — for instance, you might have four or five children walking towards school, or a row of ducks waddling towards a pond. You could draw such pictures yourself, or alternatively you could use small dolls and toy farm animals, using blocks or props from the farm set to represent the goal.

How to Assess

Materials: Four cards showing people or animals progressing in a line towards a goal, as described above, or sets of dolls and animals.

Method: Show your child a card, or arrange dolls or animals in a line on the table. Say: 'These people are all going to school (or wherever). Who is coming FIRST?'

Change your materials, and repeat for LAST. Change again, and give another try for LAST, then another try for FIRST.

Score *plus* if your child selects the correct person or animal each time.

How to Teach

Using materials such as those described above, tell your child a story about each set of materials you present. Vary the direction in which your row of characters in facing.

If an error is made following your initial question, try rephrasing your question to give more information. For instance, your first question might be 'Who is coming last?' and your next question might be 'Who will be the LAST person to go in the door today?' Step in with physical help if your child persists in error.

Keep teaching until your child can select FIRST and LAST correctly with a range of materials and in round-the-house activities like those described below.

Playtime and Round-the-house Activities

'First' and 'last' can be involved in all sorts of situations. At mealtime, ask your child 'What will you eat first?' and 'What will you save till last?' When older children are expected home from school, you can talk about who will arrive first. Organise races at playtime — dolls can race, as well as people! When doing a puzzle together, talk about the first and last pieces to be put in. Ask your child what comes first, next and last during daily routines such as bath-time. You will find more applications yourself.

REMEMBERING AND EXTENDING THIS SEQUENCE

Other attribute words that can be taught once your child has mastered this sequence include hot and cold (and related words such as warm and freezing), wet and dry, loud and soft, heavy and light, empty and full, more and less, and many and few.

CHAPTER 6

RL.F: Responding to Directions Involving Location Words

In this sequence the child learns to follow directions which involve location words, or prepositions. These are words which tell us where something is or where something is happening.

The materials you will need for this sequence are easy to find. When you work at a table with small objects, we suggest that you include objects different from the ones you are using in other sequences, for the sake of variety.

As for all the Receptive Language Sequences, any work you do at a table or in a quiet room is a preparation for the application of the skill in play and normal daily activities. It is also a preparation for the child's use of location words in her own expressive language.

Below we list all the skills in this sequence.

2 to 3 years

57. Places an object *on* and *under* an upturned cup when asked.
58. Places an object *in* a receptacle when asked.
59. Takes an object *out of* a receptacle when asked.
60. Places an object *in*, *on*, *under* when asked.

3 to 4 years

85. Places an object *in front of/behind* another when asked.
86. Places an object *beside/away from* another when asked.
87. Given an upturned cup, places an object *in front of*, *behind*, *beside*, *away from*, *on* and *under* when asked.

PLACES AN OBJECT *ON* AND *UNDER* AN UPTURNED CUP WHEN ASKED

RL.F.57

Small children often show a fascination with putting things under things — and getting under things themselves! So it's not uncommon, in the early stages of teaching this skill, to find that the child ignores the direction *on* and goes to put everything *under*! To master this skill, the child must not only relate the words *on* and *under* to their respective locations but must also attend to what you say and respond accordingly.

Use a variety of materials when teaching this skill, right from the beginning. This will add enjoyment to the activity and show your child that these words can be applied to many different contexts. Any containers which can be upturned can be used (as in the assessment), and a set of doll's house furniture will give great scope for variety.

How to Assess

Materials: A cup (such as one from a nesting-cup set). Small objects, such as cubes, pegs, toy farm animals.

Method: Put the cup upside down on the table in front of your child. Give the small object to your child. Say 'Put the . . . *on*'. Then say 'Put the . . . *under*'. Give six directions in all, three for *on* and three for *under*. Give them in random order so that your child cannot anticipate what comes next. You can change the small object you are using from time to time.

Score *plus* if your child responds correctly to your direction, with no extra help, in at least two out of three tries for each preposition.

How to Teach

Always establish eye contact before you begin and make sure that your child is listening to what you say.

In you early teaching sessions, demonstrate first. Say: 'Look, I can put the block on. Now I put it under. You put the block on.'

If your child does not respond or moves to put the object in the wrong place, regain her attention, repeat your direction once and then help her to put it in the right place. You may need to take her hand and guide her, but often it is enough just to point to the right place.

Vary your materials between sessions and within each session.

When you praise your child for a correct response, emphasise the key word: 'Great, you put it *on*. The peg is *on* the cup.'

Playtime and Round-the-house Activities

Just about anything that can be put on or under, or can have things put on or under it, can be used to teach this skill. Your child can climb on and under things too. She can put her hands on her knees, and under her knees. You could select two similar objects (let's say two cars) and put one on the table and one under. Then ask her to bring you the car that's on the table or the one that's under. You will find many more ideas yourself.

Remembering and Extending

While you teach the other location words in this sequence, remember to give your child opportunities to practise *on* and *under*. Involve these concepts when you look at books with you child, saying: 'What's under the bridge?' or 'Where's Humpty Dumpty? He is on the wall.'

PLACES AN OBJECT *IN* A RECEPTACLE WHEN ASKED

RL.F.58

TAKES AN OBJECT *OUT OF* A RECEPTACLE WHEN ASKED

RL.F.59

The concepts of *in* and *out* are taught together, as were *on* and *under*. Because many children are found to respond to in at their initial assessment, but not to *out*, they are listed separately in the D.S.I.

Using a variety of objects and containers will ensure that your child can apply this skill to a range of situations.

How to Assess

Materials: A small box or other container. Pairs of small objects, for example two blocks or two spoons.

Method: Put the container on the table. Put one object inside the container, and a similar object on the table beside the container. Say to your child 'Put . . . in the box'. After your child has responded, replace both objects in their original positions. Then say 'Take a block out of the box'. Repeat these directions in the reverse order, then repeat again. Give three tries for each preposition. You can change the materials between tries. It is most important to replace both objects each time. If you use only one object, your child will know what to do without listening to your words — all she needs to do is put the object in if it's out, and out if it's in!

Score *plus* if your child responds correctly to your direction, with no extra help, in at least two out of three tries for each preposition.

How to Teach

The procedure for teaching this skill is the same as that used in RL.F.57 to teach *on* and *under*.

Playtime and Round-the-house Activities

As with all directions involving locations, much of your teaching can take place around the house, with all manner of materials, large and small. With *in* and *out* there is great scope in the garden too. Objects can be put into and taken out of buckets of water (great fun!). Try a bucket of bubble-bath foam for a special treat — objects disappear into the foam and reappear again. Sand can be used too, or a container of slippery grain. You might also try bottles which must be tipped up to retrieve the object inside.

Remembering and Extending

This skill will be directly extended by RL.F.60.

PLACES AN OBJECT *IN, ON, UNDER* WHEN ASKED

RL.F.60

In this exercise, three previously learned location words are used in a context that is a little more challenging.

How to Assess

Materials: Two cups, such as cups from a nesting toy.

Method: Place the cups on the table, one the right way up, and one upturned. Give the block to the child, and direct her to put the block *on*, *in* or *under* a cup. Give five directions in all, using *in*, *on* and *under* at least once each. For *under*, the child may put the block under either cup.

Score *plus* if your child follows your directions, without any help, in at least four of the five tries.

How to Teach

Using materials and directions described under How to Assess, teach using the same method as for earlier skills in this sequence.

Playtime and Round-the-house Activities

You can practise this skill at playtime using a large box with a lid, a small cupboard with legs or a piano stool with a lift-up lid.

Remembering and Extending

Practise this activity, interspersed with other activities from this sequence, while you go on to teach new location words.

PLACES AN OBJECT *IN FRONT OF/BEHIND* ANOTHER WHEN ASKED

RL.F.85

PLACES AN OBJECT *BESIDE/AWAY FROM* ANOTHER WHEN ASKED

RL.F.86

These location words and phrases may be taught all together, in the one activity, or two can be taught first and the others added in as the child makes progress.

'Behind' and 'beside' sound similar, so exaggerate your pronunciation of these words in the early stages.

How to Assess

Materials: Two objects — one which will remain on the table, and one which will be positioned by the child. Your first object could be a doll's chair or a large block. Your second object could be a doll or a peg. A second set of objects, which you will use as a check if your child succeeds with the first set.

Method: Place your first object (let's say it is a chair) on the table. Give the second object (let's say it is a doll) to your child. Say 'Put the dolly *in front of* the chair'. Repeat for *behind, beside* and *away from*. Give each direction again, using your second set of objects.

Score *plus* for RL.F.85 if your child puts the second object in front of the first and behind the first in two tries for each preposition.

Score *plus* for RL.F.86 if your child places the second object away from the first and beside the first in two tries for each preposition.

How to Teach

As we noted above, you can teach all four location words at once, or start with just two and add the others one by one as your child makes progress. Your choice will depend on how your child responded to the assessment, and her progress in earlier skills in this sequence.

The teaching methods are the same as those used for earlier location word skills — refer to RL.F.57.

Playtime and Round-the-house Activities

You will discover lots of ways to practise these location words outside special teaching times. One of the best ways is to ask your child to put herself into various positions, with relation to a person or object. Talk about the relative positions of objects and characters in picture books too.

Remembering and Extending

This skill is extended in RL.F.87.

GIVEN AN UPTURNED CUP, PLACES AN OBJECT *IN FRONT OF, BEHIND, BESIDE, AWAY FROM, ON* AND *UNDER* WHEN ASKED

RL.F.87

This activity brings together all the location words learned in this sequence, with the exception of *in* and *out*.

How to Assess

Materials: A cup and a small object.

Method: Place the cup on the table, upside down. Give the small object to your child and direct her to put it in each of the positions in turn.

Score *plus* if your child places the object in each of the six positions when asked, without any help.

How to Teach

Work through the exercise described under How to Assess, using a variety of small objects and containers. Note any errors your child makes and give extra practice on those prepositions. Help as little as possible, and gradually phase out any physical assistance or spoken reminders.

Playtime and Round-the-house Activities

Play a game with a large toy (such as Teddy) and a big box or upturned bucket, or ask your child to put herself in each position in turn using a box or a chair. Involve location words in your round-the-house directions whenever possible.

REMEMBERING AND EXTENDING THIS SEQUENCE

Once your child has mastered this skill, try giving her two objects of the same size, and varying the relative positions of the objects. For example: 'Put the chair behind the block' ... 'Put the block behind the chair' ... 'Put the block in front of the chair' ... 'Put the chair in front of the block.'

You could go on now to teach *between* and *next to*, which of course means the same as *beside*. You could teach your child to recognise positions on a piece of paper or other flat shapes, such as *top*, *bottom*, *middle*, *edge*.

Finally, the concepts of *left* and *right* could be introduced.

Whether or not you go on to teach further location words, help your child to remember the ones she has learned by involving them in her everyday life — in play and in practical activities.

CHAPTER 7

RL.G: Responding to Grammatical Features

Grammatical features are sounds or words which are rarely used alone, but which extend or alter the meaning of the words or phrases in which they are used.

Most grammatical features are best taught in conjunction with expressive language, and you will find them discussed under Grammar in Book 3, Chapters 1 and 3. We include a few features in the Receptive Language Checklist of the D.S.I., not only because they must be understood before they can be used, but also because children who are not yet talking need to recognise and respond to them in the language of others.

Below we list all the skills in this sequence.

2 to 3 years

61. Discriminates regular plurals.
62. Discriminates possessive forms.
63. Discriminates 'not', shown two objects.

3 to 4 years

88. Discriminates 'not', shown two pictures of actions.
89. Discriminates 'not' with attributes.
90. Discriminates pronouns — him, her, me, you.

DISCRIMINATES REGULAR PLURALS

RL.G.61

To use plurals in her speech, the child must be able to distinguish them within the speech of others, and attach meaning to the sound. When you think about it, it's a tiny little sound which conveys a great deal of meaning. The child who is not yet talking can learn to recognise it too and this will help her to understand the finer shades of meaning being expressed to her.

How to Assess

Materials: Three sets of pictures. Each set should contain one picture of a single object and one picture showing several similar objects. Your sets might be one car, several cars; one star, several stars; one flower, several flowers.

If you prefer, you can use objects instead, presenting the single item and the group in different dishes, to keep them clearly separate.

Method: Place one set of pictures in front of the child. Say: 'Show me the car. Show me the cars.' Repeat with the other sets, varying the order in which you use the single and plural forms.

Score *plus* if your child selects the correct picture in five out of six tries.

How to Teach

Some children learn this skill without special teaching provided they hear it often in the speech of others. Many children, however, benefit from special teaching.

Use materials such as those described under How to Assess. Begin each session by naming the cars (or dishes) to your child — 'Look, I've got car . . . and cars'. Then ask your child to select. If an error is made, draw your child's attention to your face and have her look closely at you while you repeat the crucial word. If she still goes to the wrong one, step in and direct her to the right one, saying: 'We want cars. Here's cars.'

Continue teaching until your child can select correctly without assistance.

Playtime and Round-the-house Activities

You will, of course, use plurals all the time as you talk to your child. You may like to introduce some special games at this time to emphasise the plural 's'. Body parts are useful here — at bathtime you can pretend to 'discover' first one finger, then lots of fingers, first one toe and then lots of toes. Avoid talking only about 'ones' and 'twos', because the child can easily learn that 'two' is the signal for plurality, rather than 's'.

Remembering and Extending

Irregular plurals are not generally discriminated until the 4-year-old level. Until then it is very common for children to talk about 'mouses', 'sheeps' and 'mans'. But there is no reason why you can't present the correct forms to your child in your own speech.

DISCRIMINATES POSSESSIVE FORMS

RL.G.62

The possessive forms to be discriminated in this item are 's', 'mine' and 'yours'.

How to Assess

Materials: Three items clearly belonging to three different members of the family. One should belong to the child, and another to the person who is assessing. For example, the objects could be three shoes or three bags.

Method: Ask the child 'Which is yours?' and 'Which is mine?' and 'Which is . . .'s?' Give three tries for each object.

Score *plus* of your child chooses the correct item in at least one out of two tries for each item.

How to Teach

This skill can be taught entirely in playtime and round-the-house situations.

It is common for parents to use names rather than the possessive forms 'mine' and 'yours' when talking to young children. For instance, a father will say to his daughter Lucy, 'This one is Daddy's and this one is Lucy's'. There is nothing wrong with this in the early stages of language development — indeed, learning names is very important.

From now on, use the possessive forms 'mine' and 'yours', as well as '. . .'s' whenever the occasion arises, and check that your child is understanding the terms by asking her to follow directions involving the terms, as described under How to Assess.

Remembering and Extending

It is easy to involve the terms 'his' and 'hers' when practising this skill. If you have asked your child to find Lucy's shoe, you can then say 'Yes, that's hers'.

DISCRIMINATES 'NOT', SHOWN TWO OBJECTS

RL.G.63

'Not' is readily understood (if not obeyed!) in the context of 'Do not do that', but presents more difficulty when a choice is required between what is and what *is not* a certain object.

Up until now when shown two objects the child has been required to select the one that is named. But this puzzling little word 'not' requires the child to ignore the name she hears and select something else.

Not easy!

How to Assess

Materials: Several familiar objects.

Method: Show your child two objects at a time. Let's say you choose a train and a hammer. Say 'Which one is not a hammer?' Give fives tries, varying your objects.

Score *plus* if your child selects the correct object in four out of five tries.

How to Teach

Proceed as described under How to Assess. If your child makes a correct choice, reinforce by repeating the 'not' structure: 'That's right, this one is not a hammer. The train is not a hammer.' By all means make a joke of this!

If your child goes for the wrong object, bring her attention back to you and say 'Listen hard — NOT hammer'. If she persists in the error, say: 'Look, this is the hammer, and this is NOT the hammer. The train is NOT the hammer.' It's all too easy to sound cross when emphasising 'not' — so keep smiling.

Repetition is the key to learning this skill. Continue teaching until your child can make correct selections without your help.

Playtime and Round-the-house Activites

Play a game in which you pretend to be looking for something you've lost: 'I need my keys. Are these my keys? . . . No, these are NOT my keys. Are these my keys? No, not keys . . .' and so on. Give your child time to answer your questions herself. Your child might like to join in — if she deliberately avoids showing you the object you are looking for, in order to prolong the game, she probably has a sound concept of what 'not' means!

DISCRIMINATES 'NOT', SHOWN TWO PICTURES OF ACTIONS

RL.G.88

Now the child can learn to discriminate 'not' when it relates to action words — 'not jumping', 'not swimming', 'not drinking' and so on.

Collect pictures from magazines of people performing different actions, and paste them onto cards. You will need five or six different cards. Or take photographs.

How to Assess

Materials: Five or six cards showing different actions, as described above.

Method: Show your child two cards at a time. You might choose someone eating, and someone sleeping. Say 'Who is not eating?' Give five tries, varying your actions.

Score *plus* if your child selects the correct card in four out of five tries.

How to Teach

Teach as for RL.G.63, using actions instead of objects.

Playtime and Round-the-house Activities

Play a game in which a puppet or soft toy performs an action, and you pretend to forget what he's doing: 'Is Grover jumping? No, he's not jumping . . . Let's think . . . He's swimming. No, not swimming.' Welcome your child's comments or suggestions. Let her have a turn at choosing an action. You can play the same kind of game while observing children in the park or cows in the paddock.

Remembering and Extending

Maintain with occasional practice until you are ready to go on to RL.G.89.

DISCRIMINATES 'NOT' WITH ATTRIBUTES

RL.G.89

In this activity, the child learns to discriminate 'not' when it is used with attribute words she already knows — including the names of any colours she can select.

How to Assess

Materials: Materials will depend on the attributes your child already knows. If she can select colours, you might choose similar objects of different colours. If she can select big and little, use pairs of objects that are similar in all but size.

Method: Proceed as for RL.G.63 describing the object as 'not red' or 'not little' or whatever, depending on the attributes your child knows. Give five tries.

Score *plus* if your child selects the correct object in four out of five tries.

How to Teach

Proceed in the same way as for earlier skills in this sequence.

Playtime and Round-the-house Activities

Try a game of 'I'm thinking of something', and describe your mystery object in terms of qualities it does not have, as well as qualities it does have — 'I'm thinking of something . . . It's not yellow . . . it's brown. It's not big. It says "squeak squeak".'

Remembering and Extending

As your child learns more attribute words, you will be able to include them in your practical and playful conversations with your child. You can also teach 'not' with location words. Hide-and-seek games are ideal for this: 'I'm trying to find Teddy. Is he in the toy box? No, he's not in the toy box. Is he behind the chair? No, he's not behind the chair' and so on.

DISCRIMINATES PRONOUNS — HIM, HER, ME, YOU

RL.G.90

Many children understand 'me' and 'you' at an earlier stage of development, but 'him' and 'her' give more problems. You will often hear a 3-year-old saying 'Give it to she' or 'I see she'. It is wise to check that your child does understand all these pronouns and 'him' and 'her' in particular.

How to Assess

Materials: What you really need here is people, rather than materials! But you will also need a small selection of toys — any toys.

Method: Sit in a group with your child and any two other people, one male and one female. Select an object, and ask your child to 'Give the . . . to HIM'. Repeat for the other pronouns.

Score *plus* if your child gives the item to the correct person in three out of four tries.

How to Teach

Games such as the one shown under How to Assess above can help your child to learn the meanings of the pronouns, but most teaching will occur in your normal conversations with your child. Use the pronouns in your own speech, and involve them in directions, where possible, to check that your child is understanding them.

REMEMBERING AND EXTENDING THIS SEQUENCE

In Book 3, Chapter 3, you will find a checklist of grammatical features that will show you what features your child needs to learn. As we said in the introduction to this sequence, grammatical features are generally taught as an integral part of the child's communication program, in the same way, and at the same time, as words and phrases are taught.

Generally, the child will learn the meaning of these features as part of this process. In some cases, of course, the meaning is not really significant — we use certain grammatical features so that our language *sounds* right. 'Mummy comed back' *means* the same as 'Mummy came back'. In other cases the meaning is critical, and by using the features clearly in your own speech you can ensure that your child comes to attach meaning to the words.

Small Steps is an Early Intervention Program for young children with developmental delays. The kit consists of eight books, and an optional videotape program.

Book 1: Introduction to Small Steps
This introductory book presents the background to Small Steps, and suggests ways in which it can be used.

Book 2: Your Child's Program
This book explains how to select goals for the individual child, and how to help the child achieve these goals in the context of family life.

Book 3: Communication Skills
This book is concerned with language learning, at both the preverbal and verbal levels. Language is seen in the context of social interaction, and skills are taught through play and 'everyday' activities.

Book 4: Gross Motor Skills
This book presents the skills which involve the large muscles of the body. These enable a child to sit, crawl, walk, climb, catch a ball and so on. It has been prepared by physiotherapists experienced with young children with disabilities.

Book 5: Fine Motor Skills
Fine Motor skills use the small muscles of the hand and eye. They range from the baby's first grasp of the parent's finger to complex skills such as drawing and cutting. Also included are problem-solving skills and the development of concepts such as colour, shape and size.

Book 6: Receptive Language Skills
Receptive Language skills involve the understanding of the language of others. They enable a child to attend to what others are saying, to follow directions and, most importantly, to use language him or herself.

Book 7: Personal and Social Skills
In this book we look at skills that help children to relate to others, to play and to achieve independence in eating, toileting, dressing and grooming.

Book 8: Developmental Skills Inventory
The D.S.I. draws together the individual parts of Small Steps. It is a series of checklists used for assessing the child and as a guide for setting objectives.

SMALL STEPS

AN EARLY INTERVENTION PROGRAM FOR CHILDREN WITH DEVELOPMENTAL DELAYS

Book 7 Personal and Social Skills

Moira Pieterse and Robin Treloar
with Sue Cairns

Macquarie University Sydney

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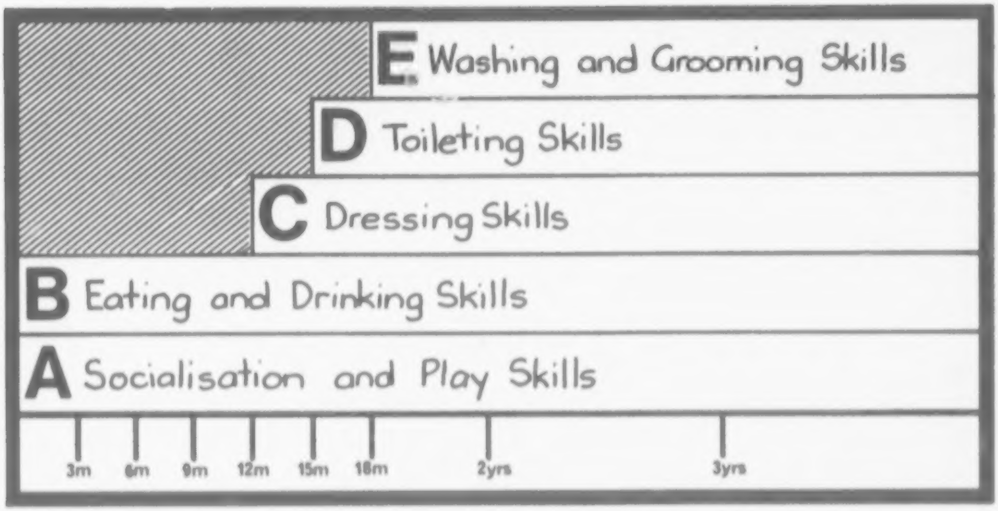
E Washing and Grooming Skills
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B Eating and Drinking Skills
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3m
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3yrs

Introduction

Personal skills are those which enable us to care for ourselves in the areas of feeding, dressing and personal hygiene.

Social skills are those which, together with our communication skills, enable us to interact with others. Because play is such a crucial part of the young child's social behaviour, we also include play skills in this category.

The sequences in this program are:

PS.A: Socialisation and Play
PS.B: Eating and Drinking
PS.C: Dressing
PS.D: Toileting
PS.E: Washing and Grooming

What are the main points to remember about teaching Personal and Social skills? In the areas of Personal and Social skills, it is not easy for parents to strike a balance between expecting too little on the one hand, and expecting too much on the other. You will hear many contradictory opinions about when a child should be toilet trained (for instance) and when he should happily share his toys. It helps to be aware of what happens at each level of development, so that your expectations can be realistic. The hardest thing about teaching self-help skills is that it is always so much *quicker* to do things yourself. Mealtimes are so much slower and messier when a child is feeding himself, and it is hard to spare the time to let a child put on his socks when the whole household is racing to leave for work and school. Every parent faces this problem to some extent, and it may be a very real problem for you. It may help to think in terms of the time you will *save* in the long run, by teaching your child to be as independent as possible.

CHAPTER 1

PS.A: Socialisation and Play

In this sequence we present skills related to the child's ability to interact with others, and the child's ability to play.

These two skill areas interrelate closely with each other — when a child plays with someone else, he is using both his play and his socialisation skills. In addition, all the skills in this sequence interrelate with skills found elsewhere in this program — with Fine Motor, Gross Motor and/or language skills.

To single out a group of skills and say 'These are play skills' or 'These are socialisation skills' is to impose rather arbitrary categories on child behaviour. After all, almost every skill you will teach in this program will help your child to play, and interaction with others can occur in an infinite variety of ways.

The purpose of this sequence is to present a selection of critical skills, many of them classic milestones of development, to help you to assess your child's progress in the areas of play and socialisation, and hence to evaluate your priorities as you plan your child's individual program.

For some of the skills in this sequence we suggest specific ways to teach the skill in question. For many others, however, we present only the procedure for assessment, and point out some of the skills from other sequences which could be taught to encourage progress. We exercise this restraint because of the complexity of the behaviours concerned. Many cannot be taught directly through a single exercise, but are the culmination of teaching in many areas, and depend, too, on maturation in a supportive environment. This sequence will help you to find a sense of direction as you work with your child in the important areas of play and socialisation — it will suggest objectives towards which you can work in everything you do with your child.

Below we list all the skills in this sequence.

0 to 3 months

1. Quietens when picked up.
2. Regards a face momentarily.
3. Smiles or vocalises to talk or touch.

3 to 6 months

4. Brings hand to mouth holding a toy or object.
5. Anticipates being lifted by moving arms or legs, lifting head, etc.
6. Smiles spontaneously.
7. Holds out arms to be picked up.
8. Smiles at mirror image.
9. Works for a toy out of reach.
10. Laughs when head is covered with a cloth.

6 to 9 months

14. Laughs at familiar games.
15. Reacts to strangers by staring or crying.
16. Plays with a variety of toys for 10 minutes.

9 to 12 months

20. Participates in peek-a-boo.
21. Plays simple interactive games such as 'pata-cake' and 'this little pig' by holding out hand.
22. Exhibits simple functional play such as putting a cup or spoon to the mouth.
23. Plays ball by pushing the ball back to a parent.
24. Plays alone — near an adult — for 15 to 20 minutes.

12 to 15 months

33. Throws toys often in play or to reject.
34. 'Shows off' to gain adult attention.
35. Gives or shows a toy to an adult.

15 to 18 months

38. Turns a picture or book to the appropriate side if presented upside down or back to front.
39. Imitates housework.
40. Exhibits extended functional play.

18 months to 2 years

46. Interacts with peers using gestures.
47. Engages in parallel play; observes other children.
48. Defends possessions.

2 to 3 years

49. Engages in domestic make-believe play.
50. Plays near children and occasionally interacts.
51. Helps in simple household tasks.
52. Co-operates with adult requests 50% of the time.
53. Makes a choice when asked.
54. Takes turns under adult direction.
55. Attends to music or a story for 10 minutes in a group.
56. Says 'please' with a reminder.
57. Joins in songs or rhymes.
58. Separates from mother without crying.

3 to 4 years

73. Follows rules in a group game led by an adult.
74. Takes turns with other children.
75. Plays near and talks with other children.
76. Plays interactively with other children for 50% of playtime.
77. Says 'please' and 'thank you' 50% of the time with no reminder.
78. Co-operates with adult requests 75% of the time.
79. Tells sex in response to a question.
80. Performs simple chores.
81. Avoids hazards.
82. Stays within physical boundaries set by the parent.
83. Shares adult attention with others.

QUIETENS WHEN PICKED UP

PS.A.1

This is the very beginning of socialisation. The child shows that he is reassured by being held close to another person.

How to Assess

Method: Observe your child over several hours. Pick him up when he is crying or restless.

Score *plus* if your child quietens when picked up.

REGARDS A FACE MOMENTARILY

PS.A.2

This is the first step in establishing eye contact — so crucial to socialising, attending and learning.

How to Assess

Method: Talk and smile to your child.

Score *plus* if your child watches your face for one or two seconds. He need not look directly into your eyes to score on this item.

Notes

Talking and smiling to your child can begin from the moment of birth. Keep your face about 30 cm from his — this happens naturally when you cradle him in your arms or lean down to talk to him as you change or bathe him.

SMILES OR VOCALISES TO TALK OR TOUCH

PS.A.3

Here the child shows by a change in his behaviour that he finds the presence of others pleasant or exciting or reassuring.

How to Assess

Method: Lean over your child so that your face is close to his. Talk to him and stroke him.

Score *plus* if your child's behaviour changes in response to your presence. He may smile or make noises. If he has been kicking, he may stop. If he has been lying still, he may start to kick.

Notes

It is a good idea, right from the beginning, to give your child time to sense your presence before you pick him up. He will learn to associate your presence and your voice with the comforting physical contact which follows. This will help him to find reassurance in your words at times when you cannot pick him up straightaway.

BRINGS HAND TO MOUTH HOLDING A TOY OR OBJECT

PS.A.4

Children first explore the objects around them with their mouths. This is an important early step in the development of play skills.

How to Assess

Method: Place a toy or object in your child's hand, and observe. Choose a light, well-balanced object.

Score *plus* if your child brings his hand to his mouth while still holding the toy. He need not succeed in getting the toy into his mouth to score.

Notes

You will teach your child to grasp objects as part of your Fine Motor program. Always give your child time to explore the objects he is holding. If your child does not attempt to put objects — or his hands — to his mouth, you can gently guide him to do so. Don't be concerned that you are starting bad habits — exploration with the mouth is a normal and constructive stage of play.

ANTICIPATES BEING LIFTED BY MOVING ARMS OR LEGS, LIFTING HEAD, ETC.

PS.A.5

In Book 3, Chapter 2 we talk about the importance of helping your child to *anticipate* events that are part of his routine. Being picked up is often the first event to be anticipated — after all, it happens so many times each day!

How to Assess

Method: Before you pick your child up, speak to him, wait for him to look at you and hold out your arms towards him. Repeat several times during the day.

Score *plus* if your child shows his anticipation by raising his head, and/or moving his hands and arms in an attempt to reach towards you. Note that the movement need not be as precise as that required in PS.A.7, but you should see a *consistent* response over several tries.

Notes

Every time you go to pick your child up, use a consistent word, such as 'up' while extending your arms towards him. If he does not respond, lift his arms towards you, repeating the word 'up', before you pick him up.

Start now to help him to anticipate other important events in his routine. Show him the bottle or breast before you begin a feed, and splash your hand in his bath water, encouraging him to look, before you begin to undress him. Using consistent words, such as 'up', 'dinner-time' and 'bath-time' will help him to make the connection between words and the events that they signify.

SMILES SPONTANEOUSLY

PS.A.6

The baby's first smiles are magical to all parents. The appearance of spontaneous smiles, which are not a response to conscious efforts on the parents' part, is a classic developmental milestone.

How to Assess

Method: Observe your child when he is near by, but is not being played with or spoken to directly.

Score *plus* if your child smiles on his own without an adult speaking to him or touching him.

HOLDS OUT ARMS TO BE PICKED UP

PS.A.7

This is an extension of PS.A.5. Now the child makes a deliberate and controlled movement of the arms towards the parent.

How to Assess

Method: As for PS.A.5.

Score *plus* if your child makes a clear movement of his arms towards you in anticipation of being lifted. He may not be able to maintain his arms in an upright position, but the initial movement should be deliberate.

Notes

Teach as for PS.A.5 — your child will gradually acquire the deliberate movement. Continue to encourage him to anticipate other events. If he is taking solid food, you may observe him opening his mouth as the spoon approaches. Perhaps he smiles when he hears the sound of the key in the door, or the approaching footsteps of his older brother or sister. He may also anticipate less favoured events — perhaps he frets and struggles at the sight of the bath-tub!

Keep in mind the close relationship between *anticipating* and *communicating*. When your child reaches towards you with his arms he is telling you that he wants to be picked up. When he makes a grab for his bottle at mealtimes he is telling you that he is ready for his milk. When he is able to use his simple gestures, such as reaching and grasping, in order to make things happen, he is well on the way to effective communication.

SMILES AT MIRROR IMAGE

PS.A.8

This is another classic milestone of early social development.

How to Assess

Method: Show your child his own face in the mirror.

Score *plus* if your child smiles at his own image.

Notes

Start showing your child his face in the mirror as soon as he can steady his head enough to look. Encourage him to look at your face, too, as you smile and talk at his mirror reflection. Some children show great interest bu do not actually *smile* at themselves for some time. It is the *interest* that is most important here.

WORKS FOR A TOY OUT OF REACH

PS.A.9

This is a sign that the child is beginning to move with purpose. It is as if the child is saying to himself 'If I move my body, I can get what I want'. This skill is crucial in the development of the child's concept of his body and its relationship to other things.

How to Assess

Materials: A familiar toy.

Method: Help your child to play with the toy, to encourage his interest. Then place it slightly out of his reach.

Score *plus* if your child moves any body part in an attempt to reach the toy. Your child does not need to actually touch the toy in order to score.

Notes

This item is concerned more with the child's intentions than his physical ability to actually reach the toy. But of course you will want him to learn to reach it, and the early skills in the Fine Motor and Gross Motor Sequences will help him towards this goal.

LAUGHS WHEN HEAD IS COVERED WITH A CLOTH

PS.A.10

Playing games such as peek-a-boo with babies is deeply imbued in our culture. Children love them, and learn from them to anticipate what is coming next, and to participate, both vocally and physically. In this item, we look at whether the child shows his enjoyment of peek-a-boo by laughing.

How to Assess

Method: Play this game several times with your child, so that it is familiar to him, before assessing. Cover his head with a nappy or other soft cloth, saying 'Where's . . .?' Uncover his head, and say 'peek-a-boo'! (There are many variations on the game, and you can substitute your own way for that described here.)

Score *plus* if your child laughs at this game.

Notes

Variations include hiding your own head as well as your child's, appearing and disappearing over the end of the cot, making Teddy appear and disappear, and so on. When using the nappy method described above, pause from time to time to see if your child attempts to pull the nappy off himself. Look ahead to PS.A.20 (participates in peek-a-boo) and watch for signs that your child is anticipating where you will be when you come into view again.

LAUGHS AT FAMILIAR GAMES

PS.A.14

The many simple, interactive games that are traditionally (and with good reason) played with babies and small children deserve an important role in your interaction with your child. Excellent resource books are available to give you ideas. Some of the more well-known games include pat-a-cake, This little pig went to market, This is the way the lady rides, Round and round the garden, and Row, row, row your boat.

How to Assess

Method: Play some games with your baby, such as those suggested above.

Score *plus* if your child shows happy anticipation by laughing, or some other response familiar to you, as the game begins.

Notes

Select a few games to play every day, so that they become familiar to your child. Familiarity will help him to anticipate what is coming. Encourage older brothers and sisters to join in — many children love to have a game that is especially theirs to play with the baby.

Look ahead to PS.A.21 (plays simple interactive games) where the child is encouraged to actively participate in the actions of the game.

REACTS TO STRANGERS BY STARING OR CRYING

PS.A.15

This is another developmental milestone. It shows that the child is aware of a difference between familiar and unfamiliar people, and has learned to be wary of the latter. This cannot be directly taught — it is a matter of maturation.

How to Assess

Method: Observe your child in the presence of strangers.

Score *plus* if your child stares at strangers or cries suddenly when he sees a strange face.

PLAYS WITH A VARIETY OF TOYS FOR 10 MINUTES

PS.A.16

This item is concerned with the child's ability to occupy himself for short periods without the direct attention of an adult. In practical terms, it means that you can give your child some toys and busy yourself with something else in the same room, with the expectation that your attention will not be needed for 10 minutes or so.

The term 'plays' is important here. Do not score *plus* for this item if your child occupies himself with self-stimulating behaviour, such as thumb-sucking or rocking to and fro.

How to Assess

Method: Give your child some familiar, favoured toys. Stay near by, but do not attend directly to him.

Score *plus* if your child plays for about 10 minutes. He may watch others for short periods in between periods of play. He may also 'talk' to you, but should not demand that you leave what you are doing to come to him.

Notes

The more ways that your child knows to play, the more he will be able to play independently. Babies generally have quite short attention spans, so he will need the skills to experiment with several objects in order to fill 10 minutes.

To teach your child to play independently, you must first teach him to play with you. The early Fine Motor skills in this program will teach ways to play with many different toys. Gross Motor skills are also important — your child will find it easier to play independently if he has sufficient balance and mobility to reach for, and retrieve, toys that are placed around him.

If your child has adequate play skills, but still demands your continual attention, introduce him gradually to the idea of playing alone. Move away for just a few moments to start with, and build up the time gradually. Do not wait until he cries before giving him attention — approach him or talk to him at regular intervals while he is playing happily. He will learn that crying is not the only way to win your attention, and that playing independently does not mean an irrevocable separation from you.

PARTICIPATES IN PEEK-A-BOO

PS.A.20

This is an extension of PS.A.10. In this item, we investigate whether the child is anticipating the next step in the game.

How to Assess

Materials: A piece of stiff paper, about 30 cm × 30 cm, with a small hole in the middle.

Method: While your child is looking at you, hide your face behind the paper. Look around the paper, saying 'Peek-a-boo'. Repeat, appearing on the *same* side of the paper as before. Now hide again, and look through the hole to see if your child is looking at the same side of the paper where your face appeared before.

Score *plus* if your child looks at the same place where your face appeared before. You can also score *plus* if your child hides her own face and plays peek-a-boo with you.

Notes

You can use repetition to help your child to foresee the next event in the game. Whatever barrier you use when you play peek-a-boo, keep reappearing in the same place until you see that your child is looking for you there. Then you can choose a new place to reappear — your child will keep looking towards the old place to start with, but will learn to adjust to such changes in the pattern.

PLAYS SIMPLE INTERACTIVE GAMES SUCH AS 'PAT-A-CAKE' AND 'THIS LITTLE PIG' BY HOLDING OUT HAND

PS.A.21

In PS.A.14 (laughs at familiar games) the child showed his enjoyment and anticipation by laughing. Here we are concerned with active participation. He need not be able to perform the actions in a precise way, but he can learn to position himself for a game or to join in simple movements such as rocking, bouncing or clapping.

How to Assess

Method: Play some games with your baby, such as those suggested in PS.A.14.

Score *plus* if your child participates by holding out his hand, rocking on your knee or making some other action appropriate to the game.

Notes

Repetition is important in learning to participate in games such as these. Your child is most likely to participate if he knows the game well. Tell your child what you are about to do ('We play pat-a-cake?') and give him *time* to get organised and respond. If necessary, help him to get ready for the game, giving only as much help as he needs, and allowing him as much freedom of movement as possible.

When you finish a game, pause, look at him expectantly and ask him 'Want more?' This gives him the opportunity to *initiate* another turn by holding out his hand or making a movement appropriate to the game.

EXHIBITS SIMPLE FUNCTIONAL PLAY SUCH AS PUTTING A CUP OR SPOON TO THE MOUTH

PS.A.22

Early in the development of play skills, children explore objects by mouthing, touching and looking. A little later they experiment with shaking, banging and dropping or throwing. Next, they become aware of the ways in which objects can relate to each other — they bang things together and put objects inside or on top of other objects. You will find all these skills included in the Fine Motor Sequences of the D.S.I.

We are concerned here with a further development — the ability to use objects for the purpose for which they are intended.

Children learn the functions of familiar objects through their daily experiences. Your child may have been showing for some time that he knows what his cup and spoon are for, when they are presented to him at mealtimes. In this item, we look at whether the child uses — or pretends to use — objects for their intended purposes as part of his play.

This skill establishes a basis for the development of *imaginative* play, or pretending games.

How to Assess

Method: At playtime, give your child a variety of common objects, such as a cup, a spoon and a brush.

Score *plus* if your child shows the function of the objects in his play, by bringing the cup and/or spoon to his mouth, and attempting to brush his hair.

Notes

To encourage the development of this skill, provide your child with suitable materials at playtime, and spend time using the objects with him. Talk about what you are doing — 'Drink juice', 'Brush hair'. This is an ideal setting for playing turn-taking games — first it's your turn to brush, then your child's and so on. Using functional objects in doll-play comes a little later (see PS.A.40) but you can start now to include dolls and teddies in your turn-taking games, to give your child the idea.

We talk further about turn-taking in the next item in this sequence.

PLAYS BALL BY PUSHING THE BALL BACK TO A PARENT

PS.A.23

Here we are looking at the child's ability to take turns. Turn-taking is crucial in the development of play, socialisation and, above all, language. Indeed, these three areas are so closely intertwined at this level of development that it is an artificial exercise to separate them.

You will find a detailed discussion of turn-taking in Book 3, Chapter 2. Here you will find several suggestions for turn-taking games, and we recommend that you play several different games with your child. If your child is not able to roll or throw a ball, you may substitute one of these alternative activities for ball-play in your assessment.

How to Assess
Materials: A tennis ball or slightly larger ball.
Method: Roll the ball to your child and encourage him to roll or toss it back.

Score *plus* if your child rolls or tosses the ball back in your direction several times.

Notes
Refer to Book 3, Chapter 2, for information about teaching turn-taking.

PLAYS ALONE — NEAR AN ADULT — FOR 15 TO 20 MINUTES

PS.A.24

This is an extension of PS.A.16 above. It is assessed in the same way.

This is a 9 to 12 months' skill, and assessment on this item is appropriate only for children whose Fine Motor skills have reached the 9 months' level, and who have sufficient mobility to reach a variety of objects. (This implies the ability to reach for toys while lying on the tummy, or a more advanced level of Gross Motor development.)

A child who has not reached this level of Fine Motor or Gross Motor development may still be able to amuse himself for 20 minutes, and as long as no inappropriate self-stimulation is involved, this will be a great boon to his parents! But in such cases, this item should not be used to indicate a 9 to 12 month's level of development.

THROWS TOYS OFTEN IN PLAY OR TO REJECT

PS.A.33

The 'throwing stage' is a familiar one to parents! Because most children pass through this stage at the 12 to 15 months' age level, it can be regarded as a developmental milestone.

How to Assess
Method: Observe your child during play over an extended period.

Score *plus* if your child throws toys during play or when rejecting something he doesn't want.

Notes
Don't be concerned if your child doesn't pass through this stage. There is no need to teach him to throw as part of his general behaviour — it would be more constructive to teach him to throw appropriate objects (such as balls) and to teach him to reject things he doesn't want by pushing with his hand, shaking his head and, in time, saying 'no'.

'SHOWS OFF' TO GAIN ADULT ATTENTION

PS.A.34

Like the previous item, this too is a classic stage of normal development, rather than a skill to be taught.

How to Assess
Method: Observe your child over an extended period, particularly when other adults, outside the immediate family, are present, or when your attention is engaged elsewhere.

Score *plus* if your child 'shows off' to gain attention. Ways of showing off vary enormously, but making unusual noises and moving in a 'funny' way are common.

GIVES OR SHOWS A TOY TO AN ADULT

PS.A.35

Giving and showing toys are communicative gestures. They show the child's readiness to involve others in his play and to share information about what he is doing.

How to Assess
Observe your child at play.

Score *plus* if your child spontaneously shows or gives a toy to an adult near by, or if he responds to a request as 'Show me what you've got' or 'Mummy have a turn?'

Notes
Let's say your child is playing with a toy car. You could reach out and touch his car with a friendly comment such as 'What big wheels' or 'Car says brm-brm'. Extend an open hand and say 'Can Mummy have the car?' If he gives it, examine it, comment on it and then offer it back. Or perhaps you could imitate what he had been doing with the car.

If your child does not respond to your interest, you could find another car and play alongside him, sometimes imitating his actions and sometimes demonstrating something new. Once he is watching you, offer him your car and then ask him to give one to you.

Notice that you are aiming to develop a *turn-*

taking pattern here. Once your child is taking turns to give and show, spontaneous and self-initiated gestures will follow.

TURNS A PICTURE OR BOOK TO THE APPROPRIATE SIDE IF PRESENTED UPSIDE DOWN OR BACK TO FRONT

PS.A.38

When a child uses this skill he shows that he understands the purpose and correct usage of one of the most important objects in his environment — the book! It also gives a clear sign that the child is able to interpret pictures.

How to Assess

Materials: A picture book showing familiar items, or a large picture of a single object.

Method: Hand the child the picture or book so that he receives it upside down. Repeat with the picture back to front.

Score *plus* if your child turns the picture or book the right way around in one out of your two tries.

Notes

If your child cannot turn the picture or book the right way, practise with him each time you read a book together. Before you start the story, ask him to turn it the right way, helping him if necessary.

IMITATES HOUSEWORK

PS.A.39

Children at this level of development love to imitate the activities of adults. Housework is a commonly imitated activity, but there are, of course, alternatives. What children imitate depends on what they see.

How to Assess

Materials: Make sure that your child has access to some props with which to imitate your daily activities. These may be toy versions of adult-sized equipment or the real thing or improvisations.

Method: Observe your child as you go about your daily activities.

Score *plus* if your child copies any type of housework or other routine activities.

Notes

It may be hard work to us, but to children it's all play! Encourage your child to join the daily chores; he will learn from this, and it may make your task more fun — if not easier!

EXHIBITS EXTENDED FUNCTIONAL PLAY

PS.A.40

In PS.A.22, we looked at the child's ability to use common objects such as cups, spoons and brushes as part of his play. In this item, we look at his ability to relate such items to others — especially to his dolls or soft toys.

How to Assess

Materials: Dolls with hair, other soft toys, cups, spoons, brushes, etc.

Method: Give your child a selection of toys such as those listed above, and observe him at play.

Score *plus* if your child feeds a doll with a spoon, brushes the doll's hair and so on, using at least three such actions during the play session.

Notes

Continue playing 'pretending games' with your child, as described in PS.A.22. You can increase your range of props as your child's play develops — washing Dolly is great fun, as is blowing her nose and cleaning her teeth.

Dolls are essential toys at this stage of development — for boys as well as for girls.

INTERACTS WITH PEERS USING GESTURES

PS.A.46

Socialisation with other children of the same age is slower to develop than socialisation with adults. This item and the one that follows usually emerge at the same time — these items focus on two aspects of the way in which children relate to each other at this early stage.

How to Assess

Method: Observe your child playing near two or three other children, of much the same age or level of development.

Score *plus* if your child interacts from time to time by giving toys to other children, taking toys when they are offered, pointing out objects or events, waving and so on.

ENGAGES IN PARALLEL PLAY; OBSERVES OTHER CHILDREN

PS.A.47

How to Assess

Method: As for PS.A.46 above.

Score *plus* if your child plays near other children, watching their play from time to time.

Notes

First and foremost, give your child regular opportunities to play with other children of the same age. There may be a playgroup in your area, or you could arrange to get together with a group of friends with small children. If your child is older, and is delayed in his play and social development, it could be worthwhile to include him in groups of younger children who match his level of development, as well as in groups of children his own age, to see where he is happiest and learning most. Be assured that most parents welcome handicapped children as playmates for their children, recognising that their children, too, can benefit from such friendships.

Encourage your child to play near the other children, using similar toys. To begin with, you may need to direct your child's attention to what the other children are doing, and help him to offer his toys and interact with other simple gestures. But stay in the background as much as possible.

Children are more likely to play near each other, observe each other and interact occasionally when play activities have been planned so that there are plenty of each kind of toy to share around. When there is one car, one doll and one bike, the children are much more likely to go off in different directions. Try some round-the-table activities, such as dough play, or provide lots of blocks or lots of cars or lots of dolls.

DEFENDS POSSESSIONS

PS.A.48

In this item, we look at whether your child recognises or claims certain items as his own, and objects when other children take them from him. This behaviour often causes concern to parents, who would like their child to share, but it is a normal, natural stage of development, and one that should be met with tact!

How to Assess

Method: Observe your child in play with other children.

Score *plus* if your child defends his toys when they are taken from him by other children, either by taking them back or by vocalising loudly.

ENGAGES IN DOMESTIC MAKE-BELIEVE PLAY

PS.A.49

This is an extension of PS.A.40 where the child uses objects functionally in his play with dolls. In the earlier skill, such actions could be isolated, rather than part of an extended pretending game. Now we look at whether the child can take on a role, and sustain his pretending in an extended game.

How to Assess

Materials: Provide your child with plenty of related materials, such as dolls, doll-sized or child-sized furniture, a tea-set, a doll's bath and sponge and/or cooking implements.

Method: Observe your child at play with materials such as those described above.

Score *plus* if your child pretends to be Mummy or Daddy, and engages in make-believe cooking, baby care or something similar.

Notes

You can encourage your child to play in this way by providing plenty of suitable materials (improvised materials are fine — a cardboard carton can be just as effective as an expensive doll's cradle) and by playing with him. Follow his lead as much as possible in such games, subtly introducing new variations on the game. Don't try to force the issue if he doesn't catch on to your ideas at first — your example will encourage him more than a stream of instructions.

PLAYS NEAR CHILDREN AND OCCASIONALLY INTERACTS

PS.A.50

This is an extension of PS.A.46 and 47. A higher frequency of interactions is now required.

How to Assess

Method: Observe your child in play with two or three other children. Observe for a 10-minute period, and either time with a stopwatch, or estimate roughly, the amount of time your child spends interacting with other members of the group.

Score *plus* if your child interacts with other children for 20% of the time, using words and/or gestures.

HELPS IN SIMPLE HOUSEHOLD TASKS

PS.A.51

Your child can now progress from simply imitating your round-the-house activities to actively co-operating with you to see that a task is done.

How to Assess

Method: Ask your child to do simple jobs for you, such as putting things away or fetching them or wiping up spills.

Score *plus* if your child, when given simple responsibilities, can complete them without adult assistance.

Notes

There is no doubt that it's often quicker to do something oneself than to ask a child to do it, but in the long run you will save yourself time if your child is actively involved in the running of the house. Taking on responsibilities and helping Mummy and Daddy in a practical way afford great satisfaction to any child. This is also an ideal context for practising motor and language skills.

CO-OPERATES WITH ADULT REQUESTS 50% OF THE TIME

PS.A.52

Once the child has reached the 2–3-year-old level of receptive language skills, he can be expected to follow adult requests, without any help, about 50% of the time. This does not refer so much to set family rules, where a higher degree of compliance may be expected, as to practical or incidental directions given during everyday situations.

How to Assess

Method: Observe your child's response as you give him directions over several days.

Score *plus* if your child complies with your requests, without extra help, about 50% of the time.

Notes

The Receptive Language Sequences, particularly RL.C and RL.D, will prepare your child to achieve this goal. Sometimes, non-compliance with directions results from *unwillingness*, rather than from inability to respond. If this describes your child, refer to Book 2, Chapter 6.

MAKES A CHOICE WHEN ASKED

PS.A.53

At an earlier stage of development, a child may appear to make a choice, and then immediately reject the chosen item in favour of something else, or may even be distressed at the request to choose between two favoured items.

It can be a relief to parents when a child begins to make true choices and stick to them — now there are fewer decisions for the parent to make!

How to Assess

Method: Show your child alternative toys or food items, and ask him which one he wants.

Score *plus* if your child selects one item and makes use of his choice.

Notes

If your child is talking, you can move on to asking him to name his choice from alternative items which he cannot see.

TAKES TURNS UNDER ADULT DIRECTION

PS.A.54

This item refers to the ability to take turns with other children in a group game led by an adult. Ideally it should be assessed at playgroup or preschool.

How to Assess

Method: Observe your child during a group game led by an adult.

Score *plus* if your child waits for his turn, takes his turn when directed and attends while other children take their turns.

Notes

You can prepare your child for this skill by making turn-taking games a large part of your play with your child at home. Involve other family members, too. You will find more information in Book 3, Chapter 2.

ATTENDS TO MUSIC OR A STORY FOR 10 MINUTES IN A GROUP

PS.A.55

This skill can be assessed once your child is attending preschool or playgroup.

How to Assess

Method: Observe your child in a group music or story session with other children.

Score *plus* if your child attends for 10 minutes without walking away or distracting the other children.

Notes

If your child is going to playgroup or preschool but does not attend during group sessions, tell the teacher or group leader what you would like to aim for — she will be ready to help and will have ideas for helping your child to achieve this goal. At Macquarie the teachers arrange short group sessions, with just a few children, to start with, and gradually introduce the children to larger groups and longer sessions. Children who have difficulty attending are seated near the front, to allow frequent eye contact with the teacher, and are actively involved in the activity whenever possible.

SAYS 'PLEASE' WITH A REMINDER

PS.A.56

There is no doubt that the social niceties, 'please' and 'thank you', make a child's language more acceptable to others. But do take note how *late* this skill normally develops. At Macquarie we believe that 'please' and 'thank you' should not have high priority where a young child has delayed language, but should be introduced once talking is well under way. Children need to learn that there are other factors involved in 'asking nicely' besides the words 'please' and 'thank you': tone of voice is just as important in denoting the difference between a request and a demand.

How to Assess

Method: Observe whether your child says 'please' when asking for something. You may give him a general reminder, such as 'What do you say?'

Score *plus* if your child says 'please' either spontaneously or when given a general reminder. Do not score *plus* if your child says 'please' only when imitating you.

Notes

'Please' and 'thank you' can be expected to occur without a reminder, at least half the time, in the 3–4 years' age range (PS.A.77). In the meantime, once you know that your child can say these words, stick to general reminders rather than demonstrating.

JOINS IN SONGS OR RHYMES

PS.A.57

We look here at whether the child can join in vocally, as well as with actions, when others are singing or saying nursery rhymes.

How to Assess

Method: The ideal way to assess this skill is to observe your child during a music session at playgroup or preschool. Alternatively, you could watch *Play School* with your child, or use a record or cassette tape, or have a family sing-song.

Score *plus* if your child joins in vocally, adding some words and using a 'singing' voice.

Notes

The best way to teach your child to join in songs and nursery rhymes is by example. The example of other children is helpful, but yours is most important of all. Your child is unlikely to be critical of your singing voice, but if you do not feel confident about singing, use records and tapes and join in with them.

SEPARATES FROM MOTHER WITHOUT CRYING

PS.A.58

The 2–3-year-old developmental level at which this item is placed gives only a very general indication of when it can be expected, because a child's adjustment to separation from his mother depends largely on how often he is away from her. (Note that this item can apply to fathers, too!)

How to Assess

Method: Observe whether the child can be left at preschool, or with a familiar babysitter, without crying when the parent leaves.

Score *plus* if your child separates from you without getting upset.

FOLLOWS RULES IN A GROUP GAME LED BY AN ADULT

PS.A.73

Assess this skill at playgroup or preschool, during a game that is familiar to your child.

How to Assess

Method: Observe your child as he plays a group game led by an adult. The game should be familiar to your child. The rules should be explained at the beginning to the group as a whole, and directions during the game should be addressed to the group as far as possible. Note that games for this purpose can include dance routines such as *Hokey Pokey* or *The Farmer in the Dell*.

Score *plus* if your child actively participates in the game and follows rules without individual directions.

TAKES TURNS WITH OTHER CHILDREN

PS.A.74

Here we are concerned with the child's ability to take turns spontaneously or at the request of another child. The child who actively shares in this way is progressing towards co-operative play — see Book 2, Chapter 5.

How to Assess

Method: Observe your child in a free play situation, in proximity to other children.

Score *plus* if your child takes turns or shares at least once, without any adult directions.

PLAYS NEAR AND TALKS WITH OTHER CHILDREN

PS.A.75

When talking is added to sharing and turn-taking, the child is well on his way towards co-operative play.

How to Assess

Method: Observe your child in a free play situation, in proximity to other children.

Score *plus* if your child plays within touching distance of other children and talks with them as he plays.

PLAYS INTERACTIVELY WITH OTHER CHILDREN FOR 50% OF PLAYTIME

PS.A.76

True co-operative play involves working with others towards a common goal, and adopting a role which fits in with the roles of others.

How to Assess

Method: Observe your child in a free play situation, in proximity to other children.

Score *plus* if your child engages in a shared play activity, such as a housekeeping game or block-building or playing with cars. He should have some physical contact with other children, and/or talk to other children about the activity, for at least 50% of the time.

SAYS 'PLEASE' AND 'THANK YOU' 50% OF THE TIME WITH NO REMINDER

PS.A.77

This is an extension of PS.A.56.

How to Assess

Method: Observe your child at mealtime or snack-time, or in other situations in which items are being offered to the child. Count the number of opportunities to say 'please' or 'thank you', and the number of times these words are used. Do not give reminders.

Score *plus* if your child says 'please' or 'thank you' in at least 50% of the opportunities offered.

CO-OPERATES WITH ADULT REQUESTS 75% OF THE TIME

PS.A.78

This item helps teachers and parents to assess whether a child's rate of compliance with adult requests is increasing over time.

Assess in the same way as PS.A. 52, scoring *plus* if your child follows your directions in 75% of the opportunities provided.

TELLS SEX IN RESPONSE TO A QUESTION

PS.A.79

In RL.D.84, the child learns to discriminate between boys and girls in pictures. Here the child learns to answer one of the questions most frequently addressed by adults to small children: 'Are you a boy or a girl?'

How to Assess

Method: Ask your child: 'Are you a boy or a giri?' Repeat, reversing the order: 'Are you a girl or a boy?' Repeat once more.

Score *plus* if your child answers the question correctly in all three tries.

Notes

It is most important to vary the order of the alternatives when you ask this question — and others like it. Otherwise the child can learn to derive the answer from your question without really understanding what is being asked.

Other questions with which your child should be familiar are:

- 'How old are you?'
- 'What is your name?' (First and last)
- 'Where do you live?' (Teach the name of the suburb or town first.)

PERFORMS SIMPLE CHORES

PS.A.80

As the child approaches the 4-year-old level of development, he can be expected to carry out simple chores which require concentration and caution. Most children enjoy the sense of responsibility that such grown-up tasks bring.

How to Assess

Method: Ask your child to do something that carries some responsibility — such as carrying a tray at snack-time.

Score *plus* if your child carries out the chore without any help.

Notes

Preschool provides many opportunities for a child to take on responsibilities. Packing things away, handing out the drinks at morning teatime and helping the teacher to set up a new activity are just a few examples. Ask your child's preschool teacher if he is able to carry out tasks such as these.

AVOIDS HAZARDS

PS.A.81

Part of the art of parenting is to be continually on the lookout for things which might hurt the child. This becomes second nature to parents, so that often they are not even aware that they are doing it. At the same time, parents *teach* their children to recognise dangers in the environment — 'Careful, the stove is *hot*.' 'We can't go that way — there's glass on the path.' 'Let's walk *around* the puddle.'

The time comes when the child is able to recognise and avoid such hazards himself — a crucial skill in the development of independence.

How to Assess

Method: Observe whether your child avoids hazards in his environment, such as broken glass or holes in the ground.

Score *plus* if your child takes steps to avoid such hazards.

Notes

You can't, of course, take the risk of letting your child walk over broken glass in order to assess this skill! But perhaps you could delay your warning for just a moment to see if your child takes the initiative — or give a *general* warning first, such as 'Look what's on the path'.

It is impossible for parents of mobile preschoolers to ensure that their children avoid *all* the hazards that surround them — otherwise there would be no skinned knees or stubbed toes. You may notice, however, that such accidents decrease over time. This may be a matter of improved balance — a valuable skill in itself — but watch your child carefully when he is playing freely outside to see whether he is watching out for things that could hurt him or deciding without prompting that a ladder is just too high for him or a hill just too steep.

STAYS WITHIN PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES SET BY THE PARENT

PS.A.82

This is a crucial skill for the active preschooler — not only for the child's safety but for the parents' peace of mind!

We are concerned here with the child's ability to stay within an area that has a clearly observable boundary, but does not securely fence the child in.

How to Assess

Method: Observe over many occasions. Tell your child clearly where he is to play.

Score *plus* if your child will stay within the limits you have set, such as the backyard, the playground or 'on the grass'.

Notes

To teach your child to stay within set boundaries, you must allow him the possibility of getting out. This is hard, but unavoidable. If your child experiences only environments where getting away is impossible, he will not learn to stay voluntarily, and may make an error of judgment on that unavoidable occasion when the opportunity suddenly arises. Give your child opportunities to play in defined but open areas at times when you are watching and ready to give immediate and memorable consequences to any attempt to leave. Don't forget to praise him for following your directions.

It is worthwhile spending time, when you arrive in an unfamiliar place, pointing out the boundaries to your child. Do this in a positive way — 'You can play here, and here, and here' — rather than giving a list of 'don'ts'.

SHARES ADULT ATTENTION WITH OTHERS

PS.A.83

Sharing adult attention is harder for many young children than sharing toys.

How to Assess

Method: Observe your child on several occasions on which you are occupied talking to or working with others.

Score *plus* if your child plays quietly while you talk to others.

Notes

The right of parents to uninterrupted conversation frequently becomes a major issue within families. It is so frustrating to be denied opportunities for adult conversation or concentration on a task in hand. If this frustration is frequently shown, the child may develop a sense that bad things are expected from him, and live up to this negative expectation. The child's need for attention does not stop just because his parents' interests are elsewhere, and he needs positive incentives to control his urge to be noticed. You can help your child by taking a brief break from what you are doing at times when he is not making demands — at times when he is playing quietly in the way that you want. A smile or a word or a brief cuddle is often all a child needs to go on playing happily. If you know that you are going to be occupied for a while, make sure that your child has something interesting to play with before you start, and watch him so that *you* can take the initiative when a change of toys is needed. This way, you will make it easy for him to earn praise.

As he learns the benefits of giving you time to yourself, you will be able to make your praise and attention less frequent, but it is a good insurance policy to keep noticing him, in positive ways, from time to time, even when he has ceased to demand it.

CHAPTER 2

PS.B: Eating and Drinking

There are two strands in this sequence. The child learns both to cope with the same foods that everybody else eats, and to feed himself these foods without assistance. These are important goals, as they give the child dignity, independence and access to the social world beyond the home.

Sometimes a physical problem makes it hard for a child to make progress, either with the kinds of foods he can eat or with his independence in feeding. Where such problems exist, there is no substitute for help from a professional person with specialised training. The right techniques or equipment could make all the difference.

Some problems with eating and drinking arise not out of an *inability* to perform the necessary skills, but out of *unwillingness*. Problems of this kind are often better dealt with if they are seen as behaviour problems rather than feeding problems. But before you decide that your child has a behaviour problem with food, do take him for a thorough medical check-up first, as his behaviour may be a sign that something is physically wrong.

In this sequence please note that we will describe the assessment procedure for all the skills first, *and then discuss teaching methods as a continuum*, beginning on page 7–19. Whatever point your child has now reached in his eating and drinking, we suggest that you read through the entire sequence before you start teaching, as you may wish to begin laying the groundwork for future objectives, and some skills can be taught concurrently.

Below we list all the skills in this sequence.

3 to 6 months
11. Anticipates feeding upon sight of breast or bottle.
12. Places hands on breast or bottle.
13. Sucks and swallows puréed food.

6 to 9 months
17. Drinks from a cup with help.
18. Gums and swallows textured food.
19. Feeds self finger foods (biscuits, rusks, etc.).

9 to 12 months
25. Picks up and eats small finger foods.
26. Holds a spoon, attempts to put food in the mouth.
27. Bites and chews a biscuit.
28. Eats mashed table foods.

12 to 15 months
29. Drinks unaided but spills often.
30. Feeds self with a spoon, spills often.
31. Chews normal table foods (cut up only).

18 months to 2 years
41. Drinks from a cup without spilling.
42. Spoon-feeds without spilling.

2 to 3 years
59. Sucks liquid using a straw.
60. Uses a fork to pierce food.

3 to 4 years
84. Eats with a fork and spoon.
85. Pours from a jug without spilling.

ANTICIPATES FEEDING UPON SIGHT OF BREAST OR BOTTLE

PS.B.11

How to Assess

Method: Observe your child as you prepare to feed him.

Score *plus* if your child shows greatly increased activity when the bottle or breast is in view.

PLACES HANDS ON BREAST OR BOTTLE

PS.B.12

How to Assess

Method: Observe your child during a feed.

Score *plus* if your child places both hands on the breast or bottle. (He need not hold the weight alone.)

SUCKS AND SWALLOWS PUREED FOOD

PS.B.13

How to Assess

Materials: Puréed baby food. A small spoon.
Method: Observe at mealtime.

Score *plus* if your child is able to take baby food from a spoon.

DRINKS FROM A CUP WITH HELP

PS.B.17

How to Assess

Materials: A cup half filled with a liquid liked by the child.
Method: Hold the cup to the child's lips. Choose a time when the child is likely to want a drink.

Score *plus* if the child drinks successfully from the cup, closing his lips around the brim and spilling little.

GUMS AND SWALLOWS TEXTURED FOOD

PS.B.18

How to Assess

Materials: Food of a consistency between mashed and puréed. A spoon.
Method: Observe at mealtime.

Score *plus* if the child chews the food with a side-to-side movement of his jaws and gums, and then swallows the food.

FEEDS SELF FINGER FOODS (BISCUITS, RUSKS, ETC.)

PS.B.19

How to Assess

Materials: Large pieces of finger foods liked by the child, such as a biscuit, a rusk, a piece of toast or half a banana.
Method: Place the food on the tray of the highchair. You may help the child to have a little taste first, to create interest.

Score *plus* if your child picks up a piece of food, holds it, brings it to his mouth and eats it.

PICKS UP AND EATS SMALL FINGER FOODS

PS.B.25

How to Assess

Materials: Small pieces (about 1 cm in diameter) of a food liked by the child, such as fruit, cheese or bread.
Method: Put the pieces of food in a dish or on the tray of the highchair.

Score *plus* if your child picks up and eats the small pieces of food.

HOLDS A SPOON, ATTEMPTS TO PUT FOOD IN THE MOUTH

PS.B.26

How to Assess

Materials: A baby spoon and food liked by your child.
Method: Give your child the spoon, already filled with food.

Score *plus* if your child holds the spoon and attempts to put the food into his mouth. He need not be successful.

BITES AND CHEWS A BISCUIT

PS.B.27

How to Assess

Materials: A biscuit or cookie — not a hard cracker or crispbread.
Method: Give the biscuit to the child.

Score *plus* if the child brings the biscuit to his mouth, *bites a piece off*, and chews and swallows the mouthful.

EATS MASHED TABLE FOODS

PS.B.28

How to Assess

Materials: Normal table foods slightly mashed with a fork.
Method: Observe the child at mealtime. You may feed the child.

Score *plus* if the child eats mashed foods with a chewing action.

DRINKS UNAIDED BUT SPILLS OFTEN

PS.B.29

How to Assess
Materials: A cup with two handles, or a cup familiar to the child, half filled with liquid.
Method: Observe the child while drinking.

Score *plus* if the child picks up the cup, takes a drink and sets it back on the table. The child may have difficulty in controlling the flow of liquid, and may spill some.

FEEDS SELF WITH A SPOON, SPILLS OFTEN

PS.B.30

How to Assess
Materials: Mashed food, a spoon and a bowl.
Method: Ask the child to feed himself, and observe.

Score *plus* if the child gets some food on the spoon and brings it to his mouth. He may spill a lot, and you may finish feeding him.

CHEWS NORMAL TABLE FOODS (CUT UP ONLY)

PS.B.31

How to Assess
Materials: Normal table foods cut up into bite-sized pieces — not mashed.
Method: Observe the child at mealtime.

Score *plus* if your child chews the food well and swallows it, and no special preparation is needed for most meals.

DRINKS FROM A CUP WITHOUT SPILLING

PS.B.41

How to Assess
Materials: A cup half full of liquid. The cup must not have a spout.
Method: Observe the child while drinking.

Score *plus* if the child holds, drinks from and replaces the cup without spilling.

SPOON-FEEDS WITHOUT SPILLING

PS.B.42

How to Assess
Materials: Food liked by child, a bowl and a small spoon.
Method: Observe the child at mealtime.

Score *plus* if your child eats his meal with his spoon without spilling food.

SUCKS LIQUID USING A STRAW

PS.B.59

How to Assess
Materials: A cup and straw or a box of juice with straw.
Method: Observe your child using a straw.

Score *plus* if your child can drink at least 50 ml of liquid using the straw.

USES A FORK TO PIERCE FOOD

PS.B.60

How to Assess
Materials: A child's fork and pieces of fruit or vegetable.
Method: Observe your child eating with the fork.

Score *plus* if your child is able to pierce the food with his fork and bring it to his mouth.

EATS WITH A FORK AND SPOON

PS.B.84

How to Assess
Materials: Food cut into bite-sized pieces, a spoon and a fork.
Method: Observe the child at mealtime.

Score *plus* if your child holds the fork and spoon at the same time and uses them together, or selects the appropriate implement for different food items.

POURS FROM A JUG WITHOUT SPILLING

PS.B.85

How to Assess
Materials: A small jug (approximately 2 cups in volume) three-quarters full and a drinking cup.
Method: Ask the child to pour some juice or water into the cup.

Score *plus* if your child pours without spilling or overflowing, and replaces the jug on the table.

HOW TO TEACH EATING AND DRINKING SKILLS

We will present this discussion of teaching eating and drinking skills as a continuum (assessment is discussed on preceding pages). Because eating and drinking are an integral part of daily life, you will be teaching your child, or providing practice for previously learned skills, several times every day. Please read through this entire section before you begin; you will find that some skills can be taught concurrently, and others can be introduced very gradually while earlier skills are being taught.

We suggest that you supplement the information you find here with general texts addressed to the parents of young children, and the advice of your Baby Health Clinic sister or medical practitioner.

We concentrate here on the self-help skills used at mealtimes, but of course, there are other angles to consider. Mealtimes are perhaps the major social times of the day — times when the family comes together to share food and to talk about their experiences and plans. They provide opportunities to practise communication skills at all levels — from turn-taking to advanced sentence construction. Many other skills can be taught and practised at mealtimes, too — picking up small objects (FM.A.11), responding to 'put' and 'give' (RL.B.10, 17), locating family members (RL.B.13) and so on.

Even the young baby who is still fed entirely from breast or bottle can learn social skills at feeding times. The baby nestled against his mother's breast is in an ideal position for making eye contact, and for watching and listening as his mother talks.

PS.B.11
Anticipates feeding upon sight of breast or bottle

Watch for signs that your baby is anticipating his feed by moving his limbs excitedly when he sees the breast or bottle. Always give him the chance to look and anticipate before you start the feed.

PS.B.12
Places hands on breast or bottle

Encourage your baby to bring his hands up to touch the breast or bottle as you are feeding him. As you cradle your baby in your arms, you can gently bring his arms forward so that it is easy for him to maintain his touch. Later he will be able to participate even more actively by guiding the breast or bottle towards his mouth.

PS.B.13
Sucks and swallows puréed food

Most children first experience solid foods in the second three months of life. Your decision about when to start your disabled child on solids will depend on his nutritional needs and his interest in trying — just as it does with any child. If your child has physical problems which may make swallowing or digestion difficult, be guided by your medical practitioner.

Early experiences of solid food probably contribute little to nutrition, as the quantities are very small. They are primarily sensual experiences, involving taste, smell and touch. Introducing your baby to a variety of flavours from an early age will encourage him to accept and enjoy variety in his food when it does become nutritionally important.

Exploring food with tongue, lips and palate, sucking it from the spoon and moving it about in the mouth, provide good exercise for the tongue and jaw muscles.

As long as there is no medical advice to the contrary, you can introduce your disabled child to solid foods in just the same way as you would for any child, introducing new substances one at a time so that you can identify the cause of any adverse reactions. Your Baby Health Clinic sister, a trusted child-care book or your previous experience with an older child will guide you.

PS.B.17
Drinks from a cup with help

You can introduce your child to a cup from as early as 6 months, and this is well worth doing. Drinking from a cup involves muscular movements different from sucking from a nipple or teat, and this exercise is valuable for children with low muscle tone in the tongue and mouth. Children with Down's Syndrome, in particular, have a tendency to persist with a sucking action, which is easier for them than cup-drinking or chewing. You can continue with breast or bottle feeding for major meals, but incidental drinks are best given from a cup from about 6 months on. As a general guide, aim to be giving most liquid in a cup by 12 to 18 months.

Cups with a slightly curving lip (such as those made by Tupperware) are helpful with many children, though we have yet to find one that combines both a curving lip and handles! Training cups with spouts for sucking are usually best avoided, as they prolong the sucking action that you are aiming to phase out.

When you first introduce the cup, choose times when your child is neither very thirsty nor satiated. Give him time to feel the rim in his mouth before tipping the cup. Give only tiny sips until he has learned to anticipate the flow of liquid.

PS.B.18
Gums and swallows textured food

Variations in texture can be experienced even in puréed food, particularly if you make it yourself — sometimes, at least! Subtle variations in thickness and graininess from meal to meal will prepare your child for more highly textured food later on. It is also a good idea to present two different purées on the same plate at this stage, each with its own consistency, and ideally with a colour contrast, too. This is fairly easy to do if you put a small portion in the freezer each time you make a purée. Your child will discover that taste and texture can vary from mouthful to mouthful.

The next step is to introduce food of a texture somewhere between puréed and fork-mashed. You can do this by puréeing half the food you have cooked, mashing the rest and blending them well with a fork.

Textured food encourages the child to push it about with his tongue, and chew with his gums. He can still swallow, when he wants to, but the food provides just enough resistance to stimulate playful exploration. You will notice that early chewing involves a side-to-side (lateral) movement of the jaw, rather than an up-and-down chomping. If your child does not attempt to chew, demonstrate in an exaggerated way, perhaps using a gentle touch to encourage him to copy.

If your child refuses any lumps or texture at all, you will need to make your graduations very subtle, starting with ingredients that you know he enjoys in a puréed form.

PS.B.19
Feeds self finger foods (biscuits, rusks etc.)

Once your child is grasping objects and putting them to his mouth, and is enjoying some texture in his food, you can introduce finger foods. (Note that this sometimes works the other way around — children who enjoy their food but do not grasp and chew on objects can be taught these skills in reverse!)

Again, the initial value is not so much nutritional as sensual. So finger foods are given as well as, rather than instead of spoon foods, for quite some time.

Start with fairly large pieces of food, such as rusks, biscuits which disintegrate into mush when sucked, pieces of toast, half a banana, a trimmed chicken bone or pieces of apple or orange (tied in muslin if you are concerned about your child's ability to cope with lumps). Eventually your child will bite pieces off, even if he has no teeth. This is an anxious time for first-time parents, but there is very little risk as long as the food is soft and you are there watching.

PS.B.25
Picks up and eats small finger foods

As your child becomes more adept at handling small objects, offer him smaller pieces of finger food and put them on his highchair tray so that he can pick them up himself. You could try finely grated cheese or apple, or small cubes of cheese, fruit, cooked vegetables or bread. Mealtimes can become Fine Motor teaching sessions, too.

PS.B.26

Holds a spoon, attempts to put food in the mouth

At this stage, the baby may be interested in playing with all his food. His fingers may find their way into everything, and he may try to grab the spoon when you are feeding him. This can make mealtimes slow and messy, but it has its compensations, because you will be able to slowly direct his play towards independence in eating. If he puts his fingers in his yoghurt, encourage him to transfer the food to his mouth. If he grabs the spoon let him hold on as you guide it to his mouth, giving him the opportunity, from time to time, to get it to his mouth by himself. You may find it helpful to use two spoons — one for him and one for you — to speed up the process a little.

PS.B.27

Bites and chews a biscuit

Given plenty of opportunities to practise, and the gradual introduction of more chewable finger foods, your child will learn to chew the pieces he bites off, and swallow them. Once he has reached the point of chewing and swallowing a biscuit, he will be able to satisfy a large part of his nutritional needs quite independently. Fruit of all kinds, cheese, lightly steamed vegetables and strips of very tender meat will present no problems.

If your child is not making progress with finger foods, move slowly from the familiar to the unfamiliar. You could try dipping a chicken bone into some favoured vegetable purée. If he will eat only fingers of toast with Vegemite, try putting some Vegemite on a stick of carrot or a piece of cheese. Offer him tastes of the food he sees you eating.

PS.B.28

Eats mashed table foods

At the same time as the child is learning to chew finger foods, he can learn to cope with and enjoy more texture in his spoon foods. Aim to give your child the same foods as the rest of the family eats, mashed with a fork to break down some of the fibre. Meat can be ground or cut up finely with a knife. Or try cutting very thin slices of meat across the grain, so that they break up more easily in the mouth.

There are few alternatives to mashed fresh food among the commercial baby foods, because the toddler baby foods usually consist of larger pieces in a smooth sauce and they tend to slip down with little chewing. There are some adult instant meals, made without additives, which can be mashed for your child when you don't have time to cook.

Again, if your child has trouble advancing to this level, make your graduations very small and rely mostly on his favourite flavours. You can introduce new flavours in a puréed form until he gets used to them — perhaps as a sauce with his mashed food. Remember that it is very common for small children to go through a 'faddy' stage with their food. As long as you know you are not offering a major challenge, you can handle any refusals decisively. Don't let your child badger you into preparing something else or putting the food through the blender. If he eats little at one meal, he will make it up in the next. Even the best eaters refuse meals sometimes, often because they just aren't hungry. If your child is a big milk drinker and refuses meals often, you could consider reducing his intake of milk — juice or water will satisfy his appetite less effectively.

Ongoing reluctance to eat can cause great distress for parents, but keep in mind that your child will not let himself go seriously hungry and that his health will be best served in the long run by a varied diet. Your child will learn that while you take his tastes and preferences into account, you are the one who makes the final decision about what is available for him at mealtimes.

PS.B.29

Drinks unaided but spills often

At the same time as you are encouraging your child to eat a greater variety of foods and to bring his spoon to his mouth, you can teach him to be independent in using his cup. This involves lifting the cup from the table, taking a drink and putting the cup down again. This last movement often causes the most problems: if your child has difficulty replacing the cup try one with a rounded, weighted bottom. Such cups roll back to an upright position if put down slightly askew.

Your child may still have some difficulty in judging how far to tip the cup. Minimise spills by keeping the level of liquid low.

PS.B.30

Feeds self with a spoon, spills often

Spilling is the rule at this stage of development! But of course, it's all part of increasing independence. Now, when your child grabs his spoon, guide him by holding your hand around his. Help him to scoop food from the plate and bring it to his mouth. Gradually reduce your help, guiding him from the wrist and then from the elbow. Children often find one part of the action easier than another, so you may be able to withdraw your hand entirely for part of each scoop and mouthful. Finally, withdraw your help altogether, at least for the first few mouthfuls of each meal. There are two points in the feeding process which may present problems. The first is the angling of the spoon into the mouth, and the second is the scooping of food onto the spoon. There is now a wide range of products on the market to help with these problems. Spoons are available with thick handles to aid grasping. Some have angled bowls which help the child to take the food into his mouth, but these are specific to either the right or the left hand, and may frustrate your child if he is ambidextrous. Bowls can be obtained which have high, curved sides which guide the food onto the spoon. Some have suction caps underneath, to stop the bowl from sliding about as the child tries to scoop. Some of these products are available in chemist shops, and a wider range will be found in specialist shops offering aids for the disabled. Home-made versions can work just as well — you can build up a spoon handle with tape or rubber hose, bend a spoon with pliers, and glue rubber mats to the bases of plates to hold them still on the table.

Your child is likely to spill a lot during the early stages of self-feeding, and clean-up sessions will be necessary afterwards. Chances are your child will enjoy helping to wipe down the table. He could participate actively in wiping himself, too — especially if he is shown his face in the mirror.

One further point about self-feeding. Let your child eat with the rest of the family whenever possible, or at least watch as they eat. Watching and participating will teach him not only about self-feeding, but about socially important meal-time rituals.

PS.B.31
Chews normal table foods (cut up only)

Continue to increase the texture in your child's food, until he is eating bite-sized pieces. At this point he may find some meals easier to manage with his fingers than with a spoon, and progress with spoon-feeding may slow down for a little while. Always provide a spoon, and encourage him to use it for part of his meal, after the first urgency of hunger has subsided. Providing some mashed vegetable, or some fruit purée or yoghurt, as well as the cut-up food will also help maintain his spoon-feeding skills.

PS.B.41
Drinks from a cup without spilling

Encourage your child to drink carefully by praising successful attempts. Help your child to feel his bib or clothes afterwards, to see if they are dry. If your child positively enjoys spilling, make sure he gets plenty of opportunities for legitimate water play, and tell him that spilling is for OUTSIDE — 'We stay DRY inside the house'. If accidental spilling persists, it is worth experimenting with different kinds of cups, but again, avoid spouts unless they are specifically recommended by a professional who knows your child.

PS.B.42
Spoon-feeds without spilling

Spoon-feeding technique generally becomes more polished with practice. If spilling persists, encourage your child to take only a small amount on his spoon. Ignore accidental spills, but praise him for tidy eating and for finishing up clean at the end of the meal. Use a mirror to help your child evaluate the results of his efforts, and let him participate in the cleaning-up process.

PS.B.59
Sucks liquid using a straw

There is wide variation in the ages at which children take to straw drinking. There is a knack to straw drinking which can be hard to catch on to at first, however easy it seems once the skill is mastered. Boxed fruit or milk drinks can help here. The box can be gently squeezed so that a little liquid goes up the straw and helps to get the child started. A long straw in a tall glass or milkshake beaker is cumbersome for a small child to manage — cut the straw shorter or use a bendable straw.

PS.B.60
Uses a fork to pierce food

Once the child has reached the 2–3-year-old level of development, he can learn to use a fork as well as a spoon. Special children's forks with broad grips are available from chemists and specialty shops, or use a small dessert fork. Let your child hold his fork in his preferred hand to start with — using fork and spoon together can be left until later. Your child will probably try to scoop food onto his fork, spoon fashion, to begin with. Use demonstrations and physical help if necessary, to show him how to spear.

PS.B.84
Eats with a fork and spoon

Most children start to use a fork and spoon together at about 3 years of age. Teach your child to use his spoon and fork in the same way that the rest of the family does — either using the fork to push food onto the spoon, or alternating them in the same hand to suit each mouthful.

PS.B.85
Pours from a jug without spilling

At about this stage, children become actively involved in preparing their own food and drinks. The groundwork for many food preparation skills can be laid at playtime, with dough or water. Pouring from a jug can be taught first in water play. Use clear jugs and cups, so that your child can see the level of the water. Let him practise his aim by starting with just a little water in the jug — less than is needed to fill the cup. Once he can aim, use more water, reminding him to stop before the cup overflows. If he has difficulty judging the level of the water, help him to put his finger inside the rim, so that he can feel when the cup is nearly full. Once your child has the idea of pouring and stopping, help him to use his skill in practical situations, as well.

Let your child participate in the whole routine of pouring a drink — getting the container from the fridge and the cup from the cupboard, putting them both on the table, pouring the drink, replacing the jug on the table and then returning the jug to the fridge. This might prove too time-consuming for every drink of the day, but perhaps there is just one occasion each day where it could be the child's special job to pour the drinks.

Other food preparation skills you could introduce now include cutting up food with a knife, buttering bread, rolling dough and cutting or spooning out cookie mix. Most young children love to help with cooking, and you will find many opportunities to practise other skills at the same time — communication skills, direction following, Fine Motor manipulation and recognition of words such as hot, cold, wet, dry, hard and soft. Just as important is the feeling of achievement the child experiences when the results of his efforts are admired and appreciated!

CHAPTER 3

PS.C: Dressing

In this area of self-care skills, more than any other, parents are apt to say 'It's so much quicker and easier to do it myself'. There is nothing wrong with saying this — after all, it's quite true! What's more, the need to dress and undress usually occurs at busy times of day, when older children have buses to catch or Johnny needs help with his homework. The motivation to summon the necessary patience must come from a view of the future, when your handicapped child will take care of his own dressing, and thus free your time for other things — other things you could do for him as well as for yourself. The answer to the logistical problems of teaching dressing skills is often found in reorganising routines and using less conventional times for dressing and undressing.

In this sequence we will present the items for assessment first, and talk about teaching later, as many of the skills can be taught in much the same way. As you read through the skills for assessment, keep in mind that they are only a general guide. The clothes your child wears will be determined by the climate you live in and the recreational activities your family enjoys. Learning to put on a swimming costume may be more important for your child than learning to put on a jumper! Assess and teach the skills your child *needs*.

Below we list all the skills in this sequence.

12 to 15 months

32. Pulls off a sock or hat.

15 to 18 months

36. Co-operates in dressing by moving limbs.
37. Puts on a hat.

18 months to 2 years

45. Takes off pants.

2 to 3 years

61. Puts on socks.
62. Puts on shoes.
63. Puts on pants.
64. Takes off a singlet or T-shirt.
65. Unzips a zipper.

3 to 4 years

86. Puts on a jumper or T-shirt.
87. Puts on a shirt.
88. Puts on a dress or long pants.
89. Unbuttons large buttons.
90. Buttons large buttons.
91. Undresses completely.
92. Dresses completely, with supervision.
93. Fastens press studs.

PULLS OFF A SOCK OR HAT

PS.C.32

How to Assess

Method: Watch your child to see whether he will spontaneously pull off a sock or hat, or ask him to pull it off during undressing.

Score *plus* if your child pulls off the sock or hat.

CO-OPERATES IN DRESSING BY MOVING LIMBS

PS.C.36

How to Assess

Method: While dressing or undressing your child, observe to see if he moves his limbs co-operatively.

Score *plus* if your child extends or withdraws his arms or legs to assist in the activity.

PUTS ON A HAT

PS.C.37

How to Assess

Method: Give your child some loose-fitting hats during playtime — a toy fireman's hat, your sun hat and so on.

Score *plus* if your child can put on a hat.

TAKES OFF PANTS

PS.C.45

How to Assess
Method: Ask your child to take off his pants while undressing for bath or bed. The pants should be loose, with elastic at the waist.

Score *plus* if your child takes off his pants without any help.

PUTS ON SOCKS

PS.C.61

How to Assess
Method: Give your child his socks and ask him to put them on. Do not use socks that are very tight.

Score *plus* if your child pulls on each sock so that his toes and heel are in the right positions.

PUTS ON SHOES

PS.C.62

How to Assess
Method: Give your child his shoes one by one. You may tell him which foot to try.

Score *plus* if your child puts on his shoes without help. You may do up the fasteners for him.

PUTS ON PANTS

PS.C.63

How to Assess
Method: When your child is not wearing a nappy, ask him to put on a pair of underpants or loose-fitting shorts.

Score *plus* if your child puts on the pants, the right way around, without help.

TAKES OFF A SINGLET OR T-SHIRT

PS.C.64

How to Assess
Method: Observe your child when he is taking off his singlet or T-shirt. The garment should be reasonably roomy.

Score *plus* if your child can take off his singlet or T-shirt without any help.

UNZIPS A ZIPPER

PS.C.65

How to Assess
Method: When your child is wearing a jacket with a zipper opening, ask him to undo the zipper.

Score *plus* if your child can unzip the zipper.

PUTS ON A JUMPER OR T-SHIRT

PS.C.86

PUTS ON A SHIRT

PS.C.87

PUTS ON A DRESS OR LONG

PS.C.88

How to Assess
Method: Observe at dressing time.

Score *plus* for each item if your child puts on the specified article of clothing, the right way around, without any help. You may do up the fasteners for your child.

UNBUTTONS LARGE BUTTONS

PS.C.89

How to Assess
Materials: A loose shirt with three accessible buttons, 2 cm in diameter or more. It may be a 'dressing up' garment.
Method: Dress your child in the shirt and ask him to undo the buttons.

Score *plus* if your child unbuttons all three buttons without any help. He should not undo them by simply pulling at them.

BUTTONS LARGE BUTTONS

PS.C.90

How to Assess
Materials: As for PS.C.89.
Method: Dress your child in the shirt and ask him to do up the buttons.

Score *plus* if your child does up all three buttons without any help.

UNDRESSES COMPLETELY

PS.C.91

How to Assess
Method: Ask your child to undress. You may help with fasterners, but do not give any other help.

Score *plus* if your child takes off all garments without help, except for fasteners.

DRESSES COMPLETELY, WITH SUPERVISION

PS.C.92

How to Assess
Method: Give your child loose-fitting underpants, singlet and outer garments, and ask him to put them on. You may help with fasteners, and give verbal directions.

Score *plus* if your child puts on all garments without assistance beyond that described above.

FASTENS PRESS STUDS

PS.C.93

How to Assess
Materials: An article of clothing with at least four press studs at the front.
Method: Dress your child in the garment and ask him to fasten the press studs.

Score *plus* if your child fastens the press studs without any help.

HOW TO TEACH DRESSING SKILLS

Here are some general principles for teaching dressing skills.

1. *Dress your child to suit his self-help skills.* Clothes are easier to take off and put on when they are a little loose. 'Complicated' clothes, such as overalls, present problems at certain stages, and also inhibit independence in toileting. Clothes that are easy to put on and take off are likely to be comfortable, too. Once your child can take off and put on simple clothes, you can look for (or make) clothes which present challenges in an attractive and interesting way. Many clothes for preschoolers make a feature of zips, Velcro fasteners and large buttons.

2. *Plan at least one dressing session each day when you are not pressured by other demands on your time.* Perhaps your child could stay in his pyjamas until the other children have left for school. Or perhaps he could have his bath in the middle of the day. If you swim regularly, this could be a good time to practise.

3. *Practise dressing skills at playtime.* A dressing-up box is a wonderful resource for any playroom. Make sure there is an accessible mirror, where your child can inspect his outfits. Encourage him to dress or undress his dolls, too. Toys are available which give practice with different kinds of fasteners. This is not the same as dealing with fasteners on one's own clothing, but it does help to develop the necessary Fine Motor skills. One of the mothers attending the Macquarie Program made a stuffed animal toy complete with zips, buttons, Velcro fasteners and shoelaces. There is plenty of scope for improvisation here.

4. *Be aware of the Fine Motor and Gross Motor skills your child uses in dressing.* Fine manipulation is important to dressing, and so is balance. If your child is not making progress with dressing skills, consider whether extra work in the Fine or Gross Motor areas might help him.

5. *Learn to hold back, and give your child time to participate at his own pace.* Let your child know that you are waiting for him to have *his* turn — you will help him if he needs help, but you want him to have a try first.

PS.C.32
Pulls off a sock or hat

The earliest dressing skills are usually acquired as an extension of play. To get your child started, you can demonstrate and help him. At dressing times, tell him to take the garment off, and *wait* for him to have a go.

PS.C.36
Co-operates in dressing by moving limbs

When taking off a singlet, T-shirt, jumper or dress, give a little tug at the garment and say 'Arms up!' Then *wait* for your child to co-operate. If your child is standing, you can teach him to lift first one foot, then the other, out of his pulled-down pants.

PS.C.37
Puts on a hat

For the older baby or toddler, a pile of over-size, dress-up hats, together with a floor level mirror, has a sure appeal. This is an excellent way to encourage your child to try putting things on for himself. You can teach him how by demonstrating, giving a little help if necessary, and showing your delight at the results. Colourful scarves, secure strings of beads and old sunglasses can add to the fun.

Task Analyses of Dressing Skills

All the remaining dressing skills can be taught through *Task Analysis*. This procedure is discussed in Book 2, Chapter 3. In brief, it involves identifying all the separate actions that are needed to perform a task, and arranging them in the order that will best help the child to learn the skill.

For most of the remaining skills in this sequence, we will present one possible task analysis. These analyses should be seen as suggestions only, and you can change them to suit your child and the style of clothing he wears.

Before you begin teaching a skill, guide your child physically through the process of taking off or putting on the garment in question. Keep his hands in contact with the garment all the time. If your child cannot perform a particular action with you helping him (because his arms are too short, or he doesn't have sufficient balance) it is unlikely that he will be able to do the action on his own. Experiment with other methods of taking off or putting on the garment, until you find the one that will be easiest for your child.

We have arranged the steps in our task analyses in the order in which they might best be taught. Often you will find that the first step for teaching is the *last* step in the dressing process. In PS.C.45 (takes off pants), for instance, the first thing to teach is the action of pulling the pants off over one foot — even though this is the last thing you do when you take pants off. The last step is often the easiest step, and it also gives the child the experience — and the satisfaction — of *completing* the task by himself.

While you are teaching the first step in your task analysis, help your child through the other steps in the process. Once he has mastered step 1, step 2 becomes your objective, and so on. Your child will be able to do more and more of the task by himself, until he reaches the point where he can do *all* the steps without your help.

Teach each step by demonstrating (where possible), giving clear directions, and giving physical help where it is needed. Gradually reduce your help until the child can complete the step all by himself.

PS.C.45
Takes off pants

Suggested task analysis:

1. Pulls pants off one foot (sitting).
2. Pulls pants off both feet (sitting).
3. Pulls pants down from knees (sitting).
4. Pulls pants down from upper thighs (standing).
5. Pulls pants down from hips (standing).
6. Pulls pants down from waist (standing).

Note that steps 5 and 6 are much harder when the child is wearing a nappy, and baggy pants with soft elastic should be used in this case.

PS.C.61
Puts on socks

Suggested task analysis:

1. Pulls up sock from ankle.
2. Pulls sock over heel, and up.
3. Pulls sock up after it has been placed, rolled up, over toes.
4. Grasps rolled-up sock, thumbs inside, and slips over toes.
5. With thumbs inside sock, rolls it up by gathering material in towards palms. Parent ensures that the child holds the sock with the heel at the back.
6. Picks up sock and positions it with the heel at the back.

PS.C.62
Puts on shoes

This is a task analysis for putting on a sneaker or walking shoe. In this case, the task is easiest at the beginning, and gets harder, so we have arranged the teaching steps in the same order as the actions naturally occur. Practise this first with shoes that are a little too big.

1. Puts toes into shoe.
2. Puts both thumbs inside front of opening and grasps while sliding foot forward.
3. Grasps heel of shoe with one hand and pulls up over own heel.

PS.C.63
Puts on pants

This analysis starts in the middle, because the middle steps are easier than either the first or the last steps.

1. Pulls pants up from knees to hips.
2. Pulls pants up from ankles to hips.
3. When helped to put first foot in, puts second foot in.
4. When helped to identify the front of the pants, puts first and second feet in.
5. Identifies front of pants, and puts both feet in.
6. Pulls pants up from hips to waist at front.
7. Pulls pants up from hips to waist at front and then at back.

PS.C.64
Takes off a singlet or T-shirt

There are many ways of taking off a T-shirt. Here is a task analysis of one method.

1. Pulls T-shirt off over head.
2. Grasps left side of T-shirt with right hand, while pulling left arm out.
3. Grasps right side of T-shirt with left hand, while pulling right arm out.
4. Pulls hem of T-shirt up to underarm level.

PS.C.65
Unzips a zipper

Here is a suggested task analysis for a zipper with a foot, such as the front opening of a parka.

1. Pulls zipper down to foot, when helped to locate pull-tab.
2. Locates pull-tab and pulls zipper down to foot.
3. Locates pull-tab, pulls zipper down to foot and undoes zipper foot.

PS.C.86
Puts on a jumper or T-shirt

Teach your child first to put on a loose T-shirt, and then to put on a jumper. The steps are the same for both.

1. Pulls garment down from chest level to waist, once helped to put arms in.
2. Grasps left of garment with right hand and pushes left arm through sleeve, once helped to put right arm in.
3. Grasps right of garment with left hand and pushes right arm through sleeve, once helped to put garment over head.
4. Puts garment over head, when helped to find the front.
5. Identifies front of garment, positions it correctly and pulls over head.

PS.C.87
Puts on a shirt

This is an analysis for a boy's shirt, where the buttons are on the right. Some girls' shirts have the buttons on the left, and the analysis should be adjusted.

1. When helped to hold the shirt on the button side, near the collar, puts right hand into sleeve.
2. Identifies button side, positions shirt and puts right arm into sleeve.
3. Puts arm into sleeve as above and pulls collar up and on to shoulder.
4. Once right arm is in shirt, reaches behind left shoulder with right hand and pulls buttonhole side of shirt round to front.
5. Holds buttonhole side of shirt with right hand and puts left arm into sleeve.

PS.C.88
Puts on a dress or long pants

Putting on a dress can be taught in the same way as putting on a jumper or shirt, depending on the style of the dress.

Putting on long pants can be taught the same way as putting on short pants.

PS.C.89
Unbuttons large buttons

Start with very large buttons — perhaps on an item from the dressing-up box.

This analysis is for a boy's shirt, where the buttons are on the right. We present the actions here in the order in which they are normally done.

1. Grasps button with left hand.
2. While grasping button, pulls fabric towards the right with the right hand.
3. Slips fabric up over button with right hand.
4. Releases fabric from right hand, and takes right hand underneath to grasp the button.
5. Pulls button out of hole with right hand.

PS.C.90
Buttons large buttons

Again, this analysis is for a boy's shirt.

1. Grasps button with right hand and buttonhole side of shirt with left hand.
2. Puts button into hole.
3. Moves left hand to grasp other side of button.
4. Releases button with right hand and uses right hand to grasp fabric near buttonhole.
5. Pulls hands away from each other to pull the button through the hole.

PS.C.91
Undresses completely

This is a culmination of all previous undressing skills. Tell your child to finish undressing, and then move away, busying yourself with other activities, and helping only with fasteners. Require your child to take off just his underclothes at first, then underclothes plus one outer garment, then all garments.

PS.C.92
Dresses completely, with supervision

This is a culmination of all previous dressing skills. Tell your child to put his clothes on, and busy yourself with something else until he needs help with fasteners. Give him verbal reminders if necessary, but only after he has had a chance to sort things out for himself.

To dress himself, your child needs to know which garments go on first. To help him, line up his clothes on his bed in the order in which they should go on. Require him to put on just two garments by himself at first, then three, then all his clothes.

PS.C.93
Fastens press studs

Beginning with very large press studs, teach your child first to press them together once you have aligned them, and then to align them and press.

EXTENDING DRESSING SKILLS

Here are some 4–5-year-old dressing skills which you could teach once your child has completed this sequence:

- Unbuttons small buttons.
- Buttons small buttons.
- Buckles a belt.
- Fastens a press stud or clip on trousers or jeans.
- Ties the first knot in shoelaces.
- Puts a zipper foot into the catch.

CHAPTER 4

PS.D: Toileting

Toilet training is of major concern to parents — and rightly so. There is little tolerance in our society for incontinence, except where it is the inevitable result of illness or accident, and even then it must be discreetly managed. Some physical conditions or handicaps make toilet training very difficult, and if you suspect that this may be so for your child, we suggest that you seek specialist advice. But intellectually disabled children — even where the handicap is severe — *can* be toilet trained, usually in the same way as their non-disabled peers are trained.

In this sequence we will again present the items for assessment first, and then discuss teaching methods as a continuum. We suggest that you read the entire sequence before you begin teaching.

Below we list all the skills in this sequence.

18 months to 2 years

43. Has bowel control.
44. Is dry during the day fairly consistently.

2 to 3 years

66. Indicates toilet needs by gestures.
67. Verbalises toilet needs.
68. Pulls down pants at toilet independently.
69. Uses the toilet with adult direction.

3 to 4 years

94. Is dry through the night.
95. Wipes self when directed.
96. Flushes the toilet when directed.
97. Goes to the toilet independently when directed.

Note that going to the toilet without direction is a 4–5-year-old skill.

HAS BOWEL CONTROL

PS.D.43

How to Assess

Method: Keep a record of your child's bowel movements over several days.

Score *plus* if your child has one or two bowel movements at much the same time(s) each day. Note that the term 'bowel control' does not refer to *voluntary control*.

IS DRY DURING THE DAY FAIRLY CONSISTENTLY

PS.D.44

How to Assess

Method: Observe over several days.

Score *plus* if your child has dry pants or nappy for fairly long periods (two to three hours) each day, in between urinations.

INDICATES TOILET NEEDS BY GESTURES

PS.D.66

How to Assess

Method: Observe over several days.

Score *plus* if your child seems to be aware beforehand, and holds himself or gets on his potty or demonstrates his need in some way. In other words, score *plus* if you usually know when your child is about to urinate or pass a bowel motion.

VERBALISES TOILET NEEDS

PS.D.67

How to Assess

Method: Observe over several days.

Score *plus* if your child tells you his needs by saying 'toilet' or 'weewee' or whatever word he knows. If your child is not yet talking, but communicates his needs to you through a consistent gesture that is directed towards you, you may score *plus* for this skill.

PULLS DOWN PANTS AT TOILET INDEPENDENTLY

PS.D.68

How to Assess
Method: Ask your child to pull down his pants as he prepares to sit on the potty or toilet.

Score *plus* if your child pulls down his pants without any help before going to the toilet.

USES THE TOILET WITH ADULT DIRECTION

PS.D.69

How to Assess
Method: Direct your child to go to the toilet. You may go with him, but give him the opportunity to do each step by himself.

Score *plus* if your child pulls down his pants, gets on and off the toilet and pulls up his pants without any help. You may help him with wiping, flushing the toilet and clothes with fasteners.

IS DRY THROUGH THE NIGHT

PS.D.94

How to Assess
Method: Observe.

Score *plus* if your child is dry between last evening toileting and first morning toileting with only occasional exceptions, so that nappies are not needed.

WIPES SELF WHEN DIRECTED

PS.D.95

How to Assess
Method: When your child has completed a bowel motion, direct him to wipe himself. Hand the paper to him if he is unable to reach it.

Score *plus* if your child wipes himself clean with verbal directions only.

FLUSHES THE TOILET WHEN DIRECTED

PS.D.96

How to Assess
Method: Using a toilet with an accessible button or chain, ask your child to flush.

Score *plus* if your child flushes the toilet without assistance when directed.

GOES TO THE TOILET INDEPENDENTLY WHEN DIRECTED

PS.D.97

How to Assess
Method: Direct your child to go to the toilet in a familiar environment. You may join him after a few moments to direct him to wipe and flush, but do not go with him in the first instance.

Score *plus* if your child goes and finds the toilet by himself, pulls down his pants, gets on, uses the toilet and gets off, without any help. You may give him directions about wiping himself and flushing the toilet, but he should perform these actions by himself.

HOW TO TEACH TOILETING SKILLS

Because toilet training is almost mandatory in our society, most parents have some anxiety about when and how it will be achieved. This anxiety is often seen in parents who have no apparent reason for concern. Parents of disabled children are sometimes told: 'He'll be able to do such-and-such (or go to such-and-such a school) if he's toilet trained.' No wonder they worry!

But anxiety can work *against* successful toilet training, at least where it is communicated to the child. Children who see that toileting 'accidents' are a sure way to upset the equilibrium may become anxious and accident-prone themselves, or may seek to prolong the drama. You can avoid communicating any anxiety you feel by working to a clear plan and by helping your child to feel that you are on *his* side. You are aiming to *help* him towards independent toileting — not to impose it on him. He will, in time, *want* to be free of the discomfort of nappies, and he will want to please you and behave like everyone else. These personal and positive reasons for toilet training really matter far more than the social pressures.

Here are some points to remember about toilet training.

1. Toilet training takes time. Even the most advanced children may have occasional accidents as 4- or 5-year-olds.

2. Your disabled child can be toilet trained in much the same way as any child is toilet trained. The approach we present below is similar to that found in many general child-care guides, and can be supplemented by such guides, or by your own experience with other children.

3. Work on one small step at a time, keeping your objective firmly in mind.

4. Each time you move on to a new step, plan in advance your response to both accidents and successes.

5. There is scope in the toilet training process for your child to feel really good about himself — proud of the results he achieves and his own control over his body. If you make the most of these opportunities, toilet training will be enjoyable for all of you — most of the time, anyway!

PS.D.43
Has bowel control

PS.D.44
Is dry during the the day fairly consistently

If your Great-Aunt Flo tells you proudly that all her children were toilet trained by the time they were 10 months old, nod and smile, but don't believe her. It was Aunty Flo who was trained to have the pot in place at just the right time. There is an enormous difference between toilet *timing*, where the parent takes all the initiative, and toilet *training*, where the child learns to participate actively. This is not to say that there is anything *wrong* with toilet timing — it saves nappies, and may be good for the ego! But it is not necessary, at least until you are getting ready to begin true toilet training.

When should toilet training begin? It is now widely accepted that a child is not ready to exercise voluntary control until his bowel movements are fairly regular and he stays dry for long intervals in between urinations. Up to this point, his system is just not mature enough for toilet training to begin.

Regularity of bowel movements usually comes first, and dry periods are usually evident around 18 months of age. Girls are, on average, a little ahead of boys in their bladder control.

If your child is approaching his second birthday and is still very irregular and/or constantly wet, ask your doctor to check that there are no physiological problems. This also applies to major setbacks at any stage of toilet training.

Even when your child is regular and has dry periods, he may still show no awareness that he is eliminating. Full toilet training is still some way off, but there are three things you can do now to help him on his way.

1. Let him spend some time each day without a nappy. This gives him the chance to *see* what his body is doing. Encourage him to be interested. 'Look, you're doing wee-wee!'

2. Start to use consistent words to describe eliminations. It doesn't matter what words you choose, as long as they will be easy for your child to recognise and say. We will talk about 'wee-wee' and 'poo' in this section, but there are many alternatives.

3. Introduce your child to his potty. Choose a potty which offers him good support, so that he feels secure. His feet should reach the ground, and it should remain steady when he is climbing off. Let him sit on his potty for just a few moments at a time at first. Sit him there when you have taken his nappy off, while you fold the new one. Aim to gradually build up the time for which he sits to about three minutes. If your child eliminates in the potty, show him and praise him effusively. If he does not eliminate, show him that you are pleased with him just for sitting, and make no further comment. Do not rebuke him for wet or soiled nappies.

PS.D.66
Indicates toilet needs by gestures

The time comes when you see by your child's movements or facial expression that he is eliminating, or is about to eliminate. He may not be consciously telling you — what matters at this stage is that he is *aware* of what is happening to him. This is the time to begin systematic toilet *timing*.

Toilet timing means that you sit your child on his potty at the times he is most likely to eliminate. It has two purposes. First, it teaches the child to expect a visit to the potty at regular times each day. Second, it ensures that there will be plenty of successes, however unintentional, for which you can praise your child. He will learn that wonderful things happen when he eliminates in the potty, and in time will actively try to make them happen.

To find the best times to put your child on his potty, you will need to keep a record of his eliminations over about a week. Write down the time of his bowel movements every day. This will give you at least one obvious time for toileting. In addition, make up a wet/dry chart. Divide the day (or at least, the parts of the day when potty training would be possible) into 15-minute intervals. At the end of each interval, check your child's nappy to see whether it is wet or dry, and mark this on the chart. Try setting the kitchen timer to remind you. Most of us wouldn't remember to check *every* 15 minutes *every* day, but over a week, a pattern will emerge. It also helps to mark meals and drinks on the chart — you may find a relationship between these and his elimination times.

From your chart, identify the best times to take him to the potty each day. If possible, tie these to some other event in his routine — such as 'after breakfast', or 'after Sally leaves for school'. This will help your child to *anticipate* visits to the potty and, in time, hold off until he gets there.

Take your child to the potty at each planned time every day. In addition, *take him when he indicates his need to go.* Even if his gesture was not deliberately communicative, respond as if it was. If you do not get there in time, praise him for 'telling' you.

Some children will sit happily on the potty for long stretches; others want to be up and away immediately. Aim to build up the sitting very gradually, to three minutes. If nothing happens, let him play for a few minutes and then take him back for another brief session. A child who is *forced* to sit endlessly on the potty can end up trying to avoid it altogether.

While your child is sitting on the potty, stay with him and chat cheerfully about why he is there. You might remind him of the big wee he did yesterday, and what a clever boy he was. If he is restless, you could entertain him with a doll and a doll's potty ('Has Jo-Jo done her poo yet?') or read him one of the excellent children's storybooks on the subject. Your aim is to keep him happy without distracting him from the purpose of the exercise.

If your child eliminates, he might enjoy tipping the contents into the toilet and helping to rinse out the potty. If he does not eliminate, respond calmly and without recriminations. Make no comments about wet or soiled nappies beyond descriptive ones, such as 'Oh, you're wet'.

Take your child to the potty on schedule even if he has just eliminated in his nappy, to maintain the routine. Avoid changing your routine on the basis of day-to-day variations in your child's pattern, but keep track of progress and make changes on the basis of several days' experience.

Toilet training at this early stage should be a cheerful affair. The child should not feel under pressure to perform, because his ability to control his eliminations is still limited. If you see a change in your child from happy co-operation to rejection of the potty, take a break from toilet training for a little while.

PS.D.67
Verbalises toilet needs

When a child holds himself or pulls a face each time he eliminates, he shows that he is aware that something is happening to him. But when he begins to tell someone else he shows that he knows something must be done about it. He is perceiving the experience of eliminating as a sequence of events in which he can actively participate. To begin with, the child might tell someone about what is happening too late to make it to the potty. But even so, this is a great step forward.

If your child is talking, he might communicate his needs by saying 'wee' or 'poo' or whatever word you have taught him. If he is not yet talking, he may tug at your jeans while holding himself or bring the potty to you or just look at you appealingly in a way that you recognise.

When your child begins to tell you, take him to the potty every time he tells you, even if it is too late. He needs to learn that this is the consequence of telling you. If he has already eliminated, sit him briefly on the potty while you organise his clean clothes, and thank him for telling you. If he eliminates in the potty, let him feel *very* pleased with himself! This won't be hard, because you'll be so pleased with him too!

Many children discover that saying 'wee' is a foolproof way to make Mummy or Daddy come running. It's a great way to get out of going to bed, and it produces enchanting sighs of despair when Mummy is feeding the new baby! But wherever possible (and within reason) *do* take your child when he asks, especially in the early stages. Your child may just be exploring his new-found power over you, but after all, toilet training is one area where you *want* your child to be in control, to take the initiative and to tell you what to do.

Your child will continue to have accidents — probably for quite some time. Attend to him without fuss. The drama should be reserved for the times when he uses his potty! If he continues to have frequent accidents, try taking him to the potty more often, in between his own requests to go.

If your child is into a regular routine with his toileting but has not begun to take the initiative himself, try delaying a little before each scheduled visit to the potty. You might pretend to have forgotten what comes next: 'Let me see. We've finished breakfast. *Now* what do we do?'

It may be some time before your child can tolerate a long delay between feeling the need and eliminating, so it's sensible to dress him in clothes that can be quickly removed. Training pants are ideal, provided the weather is warm enough. They have other advantages besides being easy to take off. They will contain the worst of any accidents, and they make a soggy, chaffing bundle between the child's legs when wet. In this respect they may be more helpful than a bare bottom, which allows the child to walk away from the consequences!

PS.D.68
Pulls down pants at toilet independently

Once the child can hold on just a little bit, or even earlier on scheduled visits to the potty, he can learn to get on and off by himself. This involves learning to pull down pants. We talk about teaching this step in PS.D.45. Here you are concerned not only with your child's *ability* to pull down pants, but with his *realisation* that this is necessary. Give him directions to start with, and then pause to see whether he initiates this step himself. Many children take their pants right off in the early stages — pants around the ankles may make it hard to climb on and off the potty or toilet. There will be plenty of time later to teach the time-saving convention of leaving the pants half on.

Once your child is out of nappies (congratulations!) the problem of toileting in public places must be faced. It is a good idea to accustom the child to using an adult-sized toilet. Seat adaptors make the child feel more secure, and can be carried in the shopping bag for use anytime, anywhere. At home a small stool could be used to help the child get on and off the toilet himself.

If your child is a boy, you will want to teach him to urinate standing up. This has a relatively low priority, as he must learn to go sitting down for his bowel motions, and there is little point in introducing a whole new method until toileting is well under way. When the time is right, Daddy or an older brother can show him what to do.

PS.D.69
Uses the toilet with adult direction

Aim to handle your child less and less as he goes to the toilet. Once he is pulling his pants down by himself, direct him to pull them up, as well. If he cannot manage getting on and off by himself, think about props to help him — a wider stool, perhaps, or a handrail to steady him. Aim to reduce your help little by little, and let him feel proud of each new gain.

PS.D.94
Is dry through the night

There is tremendous variation in the age at which children learn to be dry through the night. Most achieve this by the time they turn 4, but many persist with night wetting for two or three years after this. Being dry through the night depends to a large extent on physical maturation — the bladder must be strong enough to hold till morning.

Here are some do's and don'ts about night wetting:

- Don't limit your child's evening drinks. Thirst will only complicate the problem.
- Don't take your child to the toilet during the night unless he is awake enough to know what is happening. Otherwise you will only encourage him to eliminate in his sleep.
- Don't rebuke him for a wet nappy or bed, or convey your frustration to him. Anxiety can make it harder for him to learn.
- Do ascertain *when* he wets. Letting him stay up at night long enough for one more visit to the toilet, or getting him to the toilet first thing on waking, may result in a dry night.
- Do put him to bed without nappies once he is having regular dry nights. A nappy can act as a cue to urinate away from the toilet.
- Do encourage him to call you for help if he wakes during the night with a need to go.

- Do put a potty in his room, and leave a night light on, once he is out of nappies. Be prepared to help him use it, until he gets used to the idea.

If your child has had complete control during the day for over a year, *and* his night wetting is a source of worry for *you*, convey your worry to your doctor rather than to your child. There is no doubt that spending half the morning fiddling with wet bedding is a frustrating business, especially if you have a younger child who also wets the bed. But night wetting is rarely a voluntary act. Chances are your child can't help it, and he may be dismayed to sense that these 'accidents' he can't even remember are putting him out of your favour.

PS.D.95
Wipes self when directed

Progress may be slow at night-time, but during the day you can continue to extend your child's independence at the toilet. He can learn, for instance, to wipe himself after eliminating. It is a good idea to start teaching this skill once the child has learned to wash more visible parts of his body. The balance required for bottom wiping may be difficult for him, so teach him first how to hold on, and which way to lean. Remember that little girls should be taught to wipe from front to back. Direct your child to look at the paper after each wipe, and ask him 'Is it clean?' This will give him a standard to aim for. If you need to help him, let him make the finishing touches himself, so that you can always end up by saying 'Yes, you're clean. Good wiping!'

PS.D.96
Flushes the toilet when directed

Some children will have started to flush the toilet much earlier in this sequence, but many buttons, levers and chains are just too stiff for little fingers to manage, or too high for little arms to reach. Start directing your child to flush the toilet when you judge that he is physically able. Up to that point, always tell him what *you* are doing as you flush so that he learns the routine.

PS.D.97
Goes to the toilet independently when directed

Now you can begin to ask your child to go to the toilet by himself. If he is reluctant to go without you, take him to the door and say: 'You go to the toilet while I do such-and-such.' Join him after a moment. Ask him to go just a little bit further by himself each time, until he can go from anywhere in the house. You can still join him to ensure that he wipes himself and flushes, but begin now to phase out your directions, giving general reminders such as 'What happens next?' and finally no reminders at all. The day will come when he can go to the toilet, attend to his needs and rejoin you, without any help or advice. A great achievement — for both of you!

CHAPTER 5

PS.E: Washing and Grooming

Most children begin to assume responsibility for washing and grooming themselves without supervision in the fifth year of life — in their last year at preschool or their first year at school. Up to this point supervision is needed — not only to ensure safety and a reasonable standard, but because toddlers and young preschoolers are just too small to reach the necessary equipment. Of all the rooms in the house, bathrooms are the ones most obviously designed around adult needs — mirrors, taps and toothbrush racks are all placed well out of the small child's reach.

Yet the first four years of life are crucial in the development of sound self-care habits. Even though the help of an adult is necessary, children *can* learn to take charge of their own cleanliness. They can also learn to judge *when* washing is necessary, and where it fits in the pattern of the day. You can use the early years to ensure that your child has the basic skills he will need in order to be independent later on.

You can help your child by looking at the bathroom from his level. Perhaps a small chair or step at the basin would help him. Perhaps a soap rack could be fixed to the side of the bath so that he does not have to reach up precariously and risk a fall. Perhaps he could have his own special toothbrush rack, where he can reach it.

The most important adjustment you can make to your bathroom is to put a mirror where your child can use it. A single mirror tile fixed to the wall would do. Then your child can *see* the difference between a dirty face and a clean face, *see* his teeth sparkling clean and *see* what happens when his nose runs. The practical value of this is obvious, but mirrors can also help the child to develop a sense of himself — what he looks like, how he can make himself look different, how he *likes* himself to look. If washing and grooming skills can always be presented as ways to take care of the child's very special self, rather than as meaningless chores imposed on him by others, he will be ready and willing to learn.

Excessive fastidiousness about cleanliness is out of place with toddlers, who generally love the kinds of games that make them dirty. There is no reason why your child should not regard his dirtiness with glee, when it is the result of painting or digging in the garden. The child can learn that dirt is not bad all the time, but that we need to make ourselves clean after a visit to the toilet, before and after meals and before we put on clean pyjamas.

While toddlers have a reputation for being continually grubby from head to toe, some small children hate to be dirty, and many children pass through a short phase of this behaviour. Fingerpaint, sand and paste are left untouched. Children can be gently encouraged to try such activities, while being shown that their cleanliness is within their control and messy fingers are easily remedied.

Below we list all the skills in this sequence.

2 to 3 years

70. Washes own arms and legs.
71. Washes and dries hands with help.
72. Uses a toothbrush with adult assistance.

3 to 4 years

98. Cleans teeth with verbal directions.
99. Wipes nose with no reminder.
100. Washes face and hands unaided.

Note that the preparatory steps for these skills can be taught well ahead of the time when full mastery can be expected. We suggest that you read through the entire sequence before you begin teaching, so that you know where you are heading in the long term.

WASHES OWN ARMS AND LEGS

PS.E.70

The bath is the easiest place to start learning washing and grooming skills. Everything needed is there within reach, and it's fun to work up a good lather on wet skin. The child's arms and legs make a good starting point: the child has easy access to them and can see what he is doing.

How to Assess

Method: Ask your child to wash his own arms and legs in the bath. You may give him verbal directions, such as 'Find the flannel' or 'Rub the backs of your legs' or 'See that dirty mark on your arm?'

Score *plus* if your child washes the front and back of his own arms and legs, with verbal directions only.

How to Teach

Teach by demonstration, giving clear instructions and giving physical help if necessary.

You could start by washing one arm yourself, describing your actions, and directing your child to do the other arm.

Hand him the flannel and/or soap to start with, but once he has the idea, encourage him to find the things he needs by himself.

Remembering and Extending

When your child can wash his arms and legs, teach him to wash his tummy, hands, feet, bottom and so on.

WASHES AND DRIES HANDS WITH HELP

PS.E.71

We are concerned here with washing and drying hands *at the bathroom wash basin*. While your child is very young, you will probably wipe his hands with a flannel wherever you happen to be. As soon as it is practical, start taking him to the bathroom for hand washing — or to the place where he will wash his hands when he can do it all by himself.

How to Assess

Method: Help your child by handing him the things he needs and turning on the taps. Let him do the actual washing and drying by himself, and observe.

Score *plus* if your child washes his hands so that they are clean, and dries his hands thoroughly, with no more help than that described above. He should wash and dry his hands well enough to make any 'finishing off' by you unnecessary.

How to Teach

Teach by demonstration, giving clear directions and giving physical help if necessary.

If your child's hands are visibly dirty, show him the dirt beforehand. Let him inspect the results afterwards.

Always work to a fixed routine — for example:

1. Turn on the tap. If you do this for him describe what you are doing.
2. Take the soap.
3. Wet the soap and hands.
4. Rub the soap.
5. Put down the soap.
6. Rub the hands together.
7. Rinse the hands.
8. Turn off the tap.
9. Take the towel.
10. Dry the hands.
11. Put back the towel (or give it back to parent).

Even before your child can participate in all the steps, describe them to him each time. This will help him to learn the routine and anticipate what comes next.

Remembering and Extending

As your child gains the height to reach the soap and flannel, and the strength to turn on the taps, you can let him do more and more for himself. A sturdy stool at the basin will encourage him to be independent. Help him to recognise his own towel — if all your towels look much the same, teach him to recognise his by the position in which it is hung.

As well as encouraging him to do more for himself, reduce your verbal directions, so that he has to think for himself about what step comes next.

USES A TOOTHBRUSH WITH ADULT ASSISTANCE

PS.E.72

You will, of course, clean your child's teeth from the time that teeth appear. Independent teeth cleaning will be learned more easily if you follow a fixed routine right from the start, so that your child knows what to expect when *you* clean his teeth, and what to aim for when *he* cleans them.

How to Assess

Method: Ask your child to clean his teeth. You may squeeze toothpaste onto his brush for him. Give a verbal direction for each step.

Score *plus* if your child cleans teeth with verbal directions but no physical assistance beyond that described above. He must clean his teeth with the correct action, and brush upper and lower teeth and front teeth.

How to Teach

As early as practicable, start helping your child to clean his teeth, rather than doing it for him while he remains passive.

Follow the same routine each time, describing each step in simple words that you will use later as directions.

Let your child's hand be in contact with the toothbrush, while you hold his hand and guide his movements.

Continue giving clear directions, but gradually reduce your physical help.

Finish every session with a look in the mirror. Let your child feel proud of his sparkling teeth.

Sometimes a child develops an aversion to teeth-cleaning time. If this describes your child, try setting up the bathroom with a special toothbrush rack at just the right height, and toothpaste that he really likes. Set a kitchen timer and ask him to brush until it pings — just a few moments the first time, building up slowly to a reasonable time. One family we know used a special teeth-cleaning audio cassette — made by a musical grandfather — which combined clear instructions with suitable music — high music for the upper teeth, low music for the bottom teeth and round-and-round music for the front. This proved very popular with the child's older sisters, as well!

It is a good idea to brush your child's teeth yourself, at least once a day, to be sure that plaque does not build up. Follow the same routine every day; for instance: 'You brush your teeth in the morning, and we both have a turn at night.'

CLEANS TEETH WITH VERBAL DIRECTIONS

PS.E.98

This is a direct extension of the previous skill in this sequence. Now the child learns to put the toothpaste on his brush by himself, and should complete the job so that no further brushing is necessary.

How to Assess

Method: Direct your child to clean his teeth. The toothpaste and toothbrush should be within reach. You may give verbal directions for each step.

Score *plus* if your child squeezes an appropriate amount of toothpaste on his brush, cleans his teeth so that no further brushing is necessary and rinses his mouth. No physical help should be given.

How to Teach

Give your child extra practice at the difficult task of squeezing out the toothpaste by asking him to prepare your brush for you.

Help him physically at first, by holding your hands over his. Withdraw your help as soon as possible.

Note that the new plastic toothpaste tubes make squeezing easier than the old metal ones.

Encourage him to remove the cap from the tube himself (ensure that it is loose, at first) and to replace it. He should also be responsible, as far as possible, for putting the equipment away afterwards, turning off the tap (if he is able) and wiping his face.

WIPES NOSE WITH NO REMINDER

PS.E.99

If your child rarely has a cold, it will take longer for him to learn this skill, but then, the need for it won't be very pressing! Many children have several colds a year, and the skill of dealing independently with a runny nose gives a child dignity. A child who hates having his nose wiped by others may feel much happier about doing it himself.

How to Assess

Method: Observe your child at the appropriate times.

Score *plus* if your child wipes his nose when necessary, so that there is no need for further 'mopping up'. Note that at this stage a child may still require help when a good hard blow is needed.

How to Teach

As early as practicable, help your child to hold his handkerchief and wipe his own nose, rather than doing it for him. Let your child feel the wetness beforehand, and when possible, show him his face in the mirror.

Gradually reduce your physical help until you are giving verbal instructions only.

Once your child can wipe his nose with directions, start giving more general reminders — 'Your nose is running. What will you do?' or 'Look in the mirror. What do you need?'

Finally, hold back your reminders until your child has had the opportunity to sense his need, and deal with it, himself.

When your child has a runny nose, dress him in clothes with pockets. Put a handkerchief in his pocket at dressing time, and tell him what it is for. You could also leave tissues around in obvious places, but hankies are kinder to sore, raw noses.

You may still help him when he needs to blow his nose, but give simple directions that will help him to blow by himself, later.

WASHES FACE AND HANDS UNAIDED

PS.E.100

Here, the child's washing skills are extended to include his face. Assess and teach as for PS.E.71 but now including the face as well as the hands, and eliminate all physical and verbal assistance beyond general directions such as 'Wash your face'. (Help may be given with taps if they are stiff or inaccessible.)

EXTENDING WASHING AND GROOMING SKILLS

The following skills are usually attained in the fifth year, but you can begin teaching them when your child is ready, regardless of age:

- Bathing self (except for running the water).
- Brushing teeth without verbal directions.
- Combing or brushing the hair.
- Wiping *and* blowing the nose.

Small Steps is an Early Intervention Program for young children with developmental delays. The kit consists of eight books, and an optional videotape program.

Book 1: Introduction to Small Steps
This introductory book presents the background to Small Steps, and suggests ways in which it can be used.

Book 2: Your Child's Program
This book explains how to select goals for the individual child, and how to help the child achieve these goals in the context of family life.

Book 3: Communication Skills
This book is concerned with language learning, at both the preverbal and verbal levels. Language is seen in the context of social interaction, and skills are taught through play and 'everyday' activities.

Book 4: Gross Motor Skills
This book presents the skills which involve the large muscles of the body. These enable a child to sit, crawl, walk, climb, catch a ball and so on. It has been prepared by physiotherapists experienced with young children with disabilities.

Book 5: Fine Motor Skills
Fine Motor skills use the small muscles of the hand and eye. They range from the baby's first grasp of the parent's finger to complex skills such as drawing and cutting. Also included are problem-solving skills and the development of concepts such as colour, shape and size.

Book 6: Receptive Language Skills
Receptive Language skills involve the understanding of the language of others. They enable a child to attend to what others are saying, to follow directions and, most importantly, to use language him or herself.

Book 7: Personal and Social Skills
In this book we look at skills that help children to relate to others, to play and to achieve independence in eating, toileting, dressing and grooming.

Book 8: Developmental Skills Inventory
The D.S.I. draws together the individual parts of Small Steps. It is a series of checklists used for assessing the child and as a guide for setting objectives.

SMALL STEPS

AN EARLY INTERVENTION PROGRAM FOR CHILDREN WITH DEVELOPMENTAL DELAYS

Book 8 Developmental Skills Inventory

Moira Pieterse and Robin Treloar
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Introduction

In this volume you will find the *Developmental Skills Inventory* (D.S.I.). This inventory consists of four checklists:

- Gross Motor Checklist
- Fine Motor Checklist
- Receptive Language Checklist
- Personal and Social Checklist

These checklists can be used to assess a child up to the 4-year-old level, and as a basis for setting up an individual teaching program for that child. Procedures are described in detail in Book 2, Chapters 1 and 2.

This volume also contains a *Summary of the Communication Checklists* presented in Book 3.

8–2

Gross Motor Checklist

	Date:				
		+/–	+/–	+/–	+/–
0 to 2 months					
Prewalking					
A.1	On tummy, turns head to either side.				
A.2	On tummy, raises head and maintains at 45°.				
A.3	Lifts head from shoulder in side lying.				
A.4	Attempts to lift head when pulled to sit from 45°.				
3 months					
Prewalking					
A.5	On tummy, lifts head to 90°, weight on forearms.				
A.6	On back, keeps head in midline with chin tuck.				
A.7	On back, brings hands together on chest.				
A.8	Pulled to sit, only slight head lag.				
A.9	Held in sitting, holds head up, chin jutting.				
A.10	Held in standing, bears some weight.				
4 months					
Prewalking					
A.11	On tummy, bears weight on forearms, with elbows in front of shoulders and chin tucked.				
A.12	On tummy, legs not always frogged, random kicking.				
A.13	On back, plays with arms held up and away from body.				
A.14	On back, brings hands to knees.				
A.15	On back, rolls to side.				
A.16	Pulled to sit, keeps head in line with body.				

Please use this page to add your comments.

	Date:				
		+/−	+/−	+/−	+/−
A.17	Pulled to sit through side lying, holds head steady.				
A.18	Sitting, holds head steady, with chin tuck.				
A.19	Standing, takes most weight and controls head and upper trunk.				
5 months *Prewalking* A.20	On tummy, takes weight on extended arms.				
A.21	On tummy, weight on forearms, reaches for a toy.				
A.22	On tummy, accidentally rolls to back.				
A.23	On back, reaches out with straight arms, hands together.				
A.24	On back, rolls to side, remaining on side to play.				
A.25	Sits unsupported for one minute.				
A.26	Standing, feet flat, leans on support.				
6 months *Prewalking* A.27	On tummy, full balance reactions present.				
A.28	On tummy, props on extended arms, raising trunk and tummy.				
A.29	On tummy, lifts legs up behind, and close together.				
A.30	On tummy, semi-rolls to side to reach for a toy.				
A.31	On tummy, attempts to reach while on straight arms.				
A.32	On back, rolls to tummy.				
A.33	Pulled to sit, initiates with head, pulls with arms.				

Please use this page to add your comments.

	Date:				
		+/–	+/–	+/–	+/–
A.34	Sitting, puts straight arms forward to avoid a fall.				
A.35	Sits for 10 minutes, arms free to reach and play.				
A.36	Standing, takes full weight.				
7 months					
Prewalking					
A.37	On tummy, turns in circles.				
A.38	On tummy, rolls to side and plays, propped on one elbow.				
A.39	On tummy, gets to crawl position and rocks.				
A.40	Gets from crawl position to sitting.				
A.41	On tummy, creeps forward with arm pull.				
A.42	On back, full balance reactions present.				
A.43	Sitting, rotates trunk, plays freely with arms.				
A.44	Gets to sitting from tummy.				
A.45	Pulls to stand, straightening both legs, pulls with arms.				
A.46	Stands at furniture, supporting with arms, and bounces.				
8 months					
Prewalking					
A.47	Sitting, fully developed trunk balance reactions present.				
A.48	Sits unsupported, does not fall when reaching to the side.				
A.49	Sitting, props on a straight arm to the side to prevent a fall.				
A.50	Gets from sitting to crawl position.				
A.51	Crawls alone.				

Please use this page to add your comments.

	Date:				
		+/−	+/−	+/−	+/−
A.52	Pulls to kneel and maintains.				
A.53	Standing at furniture, relies on legs more than arms.				
9 months					
Prewalking					
A.54	Standing at furniture, turns around and reaches with one hand.				
A.55	Gets from standing to sitting on floor by falling.				
A.56	Cruises sideways around furniture.				
A.57	Pulls to stand, relies on arms, passes through half-kneeling.				
A.58	Cruises around furniture, semi-turned in the direction of travel.				
A.59	Stands, one hand held.				
10 to 11 months					
Prewalking					
A.60	Uses a great variety of sitting positions.				
A.61	Sitting, props with straight arms backwards to prevent a fall.				
A 62	Gets from standing to floor, using hand to stabilise on furniture.				
A.63	Gets to stand through half-kneeling or squat positions, with little arm support.				
A.64	Walks sideways along a wall.				
A.65	Walks with both hands held low.				

Please use this page to add your comments.

	Date:				
		+/–	+/–	+/–	+/–
12 to 15 months					
Balancing, Walking, Running					
B.66	Cruises between furniture, crossing a gap.				
B.67	Walks, pushing a cart.				
B.68	Kneels unaided.				
B.69	Stands alone for 10 seconds.				
B.70	Walks, one hand held.				
B.71	Stands from floor alone.				
B.72	Walks alone, arms held high.				
Stairs and Climbing					
C.73	Climbs stairs on hands and knees.				
Ball Skills					
D.74	Throws a ball when sitting, any manner.				
15 to 18 months					
Balancing, Walking, Running					
B.75	Walks alone, arms free and relaxed.				
B.76	Pulls a wheeled toy on a string.				
B.77	Stoops to floor and recovers.				
B.78	Stands from a small stool.				
B.79	Runs (hurried walk) with eyes fixed on the ground.				
Stairs and Climbing					
C.80	Crawls backwards down stairs.				
18 months to 2 years					
Balancing, Walking, Running					
B.81	Walks, able to turn and stop suddenly.				
B.82	Walks a 30 cm board on the floor, aided.				
B.83	Backs, or slides sideways, into a small chair.				

Please use this page to add your comments.

	Date:				
		+/−	+/−	+/−	+/−
Stairs and Climbing					
C.84	Walks up stairs, holding the rail *and* hand held, two feet to a step.				
Ball Skills					
D.85	Walks into a large ball, attempting to kick it.				
Jumping					
E.86	Begins to jump with support.				
2 to 3 years					
Balancing, Walking, Running					
B.87	Carries a large object, 30 cm in diameter.				
B.88	Steps over obstacles while walking.				
B.89	Walks between two parallel lines, 30 cm apart.				
B.90	Walks backwards.				
B.91	Squats to play without losing balance.				
B.92	Stands from a small chair without using hands for support.				
B.93	Pushes and pulls large toys.				
B.94	Runs forward on whole foot, stiffly.				
B.95	Walks four steps with one foot on a balance beam.				
B.96	Stands on tiptoes.				
B.97	Stands on one foot for three seconds.				
B.98	Walks a 20 cm board on the floor, alternating feet, unaided.				

Please use this page to add your comments.

	Date:				
		+/–	+/–	+/–	+/–
Stairs and Climbing					
C.99	Walks up stairs, holding the rail, two feet to a step.				
C.100	Walks down stairs, holding the rail *and* hand held, two feet to a step.				
C.101	Steps up on a block unaided.				
C.102	Steps down from a block unaided.				
C.103	Walks up stairs, holding the rail, alternating feet.				
C.104	Climbs up and down a 1 metre ladder or frame.				
C.105	Goes up and down a slide independently.				
Ball Skills					
D.106	Throws a small ball into a basket at close range, underhand.				
D.107	Kicks a ball with a swinging kick.				
D.108	Stiffly casts a small ball overhand, feet together, hand behind head.				
D.109	Runs up to a ball, stops to aim before kicking.				
Jumping					
E.110	Jumps, feet barely off the ground.				
E.111	Jumps over a rope on the ground.				
E.112	Jumps from a block or bottom step, hands held.				
E.113	Jumps in place unaided, feet apart.				
Trike Riding					
F.114	Puts feet on pedals when pushed.				
F.115	Pedals a trike, still putting feet to ground at corners.				

Please use this page to add your comments.

	Date:				
		+/–	+/–	+/–	+/–
3 to 4 years					
Balancing, Walking, Running					
B.116	Walks forward, backward, sideways, hauling large toys.				
B.117	Walks on tiptoes for 3 metres.				
B.118	Walks a 10 cm elevated balance beam with some help.				
B.119	Walks a narrow line on the floor unaided.				
B.120	Balances on preferred foot for five seconds.				
B.121	Runs, stops, turns corners, avoids obstacles.				
B.122	Runs on forefoot, weight forward, with alternate arm swing.				
Stairs and Climbing					
C.123	Walks up stairs, not holding the rail, alternating feet.				
C.124	Walks down stairs, holding the rail, alternating feet.				
C.125	Carries objects up and down stairs.				
C.126	Climbs up and down a 3 metre ladder or frame.				
Ball Skills					
D.127	Throws a small ball overhand, with twist.				
D.128	Catches a 15 cm ball with arms.				
D.129	Takes a running kick at a ball (may miss it).				
Jumping					
E.130	Jumps forward over a rope, 4 cm off the ground, feet together.				
E.131	Broad jumps 30 cm.				
E.132	Jumps from a bottom step or block 20 cm high, unaided.				

Please use this page to add your comments.

Date:				
	+/–	+/–	+/–	+/–
E.133 Jumps sideways, backwards.				
Trike Riding F.134 Steers a trike around wide corners.				

Please use this page to add your comments.

8–20

Fine Motor Checklist

	Date:				
		+/–	+/–	+/–	+/–
0 to 3 months					
Looking					
A.1	Moves eyes towards an object and fixates for a few seconds.				
A.2	Follows with eyes across midline.				
A.3	Tracks an object 90° lying.				
A.4	Follows with eyes vertically.				
Grasping					
B.5	Brings hands together.				
B.6	Holds a rattle when placed in the hand.				
Object Permanence					
C.7	Lingers at the point of an object's disappearance after following.				
3 to 6 months					
Looking					
A.8	Looks from one object to another.				
A.9	Visually inspects an object held in the hand.				
A.10	Tracks an object 180° lying.				
A.11	Looks at a small object.				
Grasping					
B.12	Grasps a rattle actively.				
B.13	Holds two objects, when given.				
B.14	Reaches with two hands towards objects.				
B.15	Reaches and attains objects lying.				
B.16	Reaches and attains objects sitting.				
B.17	Transfers a toy hand to hand.				

Please use this page to add your comments.

Date:				
	+/−	+/−	+/−	+/−
6 to 9 months *Grasping* B.18 Rakes and attains a raisin.				
B.19 Picks up and holds two objects.				
B.20 Shakes a rattle actively.				
B.21 Uses the same object in different ways.				
B.22 Pulls a peg from a pegboard.				
B.23 Uses the thumb and finger to pick up small objects.				
Object Permanence C.24 Finds a partly hidden toy.				
C.25 Looks to the floor when a toy drops.				
C.26 Removes an obstruction to attain the desired object.				
Putting D.27 Releases an object when the wrist is supported.				
9 to 12 months *Grasping* B.28 Pokes at holes in a pegboard in imitation.				
B.29 Takes an object from a container.				
B.30 Pulls rings off a stick.				
B.31 Uses a pincer grasp to pick up a raisin.				
Object Permanence C.32 Finds a completely hidden toy.				
Manipulative Skills E.33 Pulls a string horizontally to attain a toy.				
E.34 Pushes a toy train or car.				
E.35 Bangs two cubes together.				

Please use this page to add your comments.

Date:				
	+/–	+/–	+/–	+/–
Putting D.36 Puts objects into a bowl.				
D.37 Places large rings on a stick.				
D.38 Places a peg in a can.				
Problem Solving and Puzzles H.39 Nests two cups.				
Drawing F.40 Attempts to imitate scribble.				
Book Skills G.41 Looks at a book with an adult.				
12 to 15 months *Object Permanence* C.42 Finds a hidden object under two covers.				
Putting D.43 Puts a large peg in a pegboard.				
D.44 Puts a circle in the formboard (no choice).				
D.45 Builds a tower of two cubes.				
Drawing F.46 Holds a crayon.				
F.47 Marks paper with a crayon.				
Book Skills G.48 Pats a picture on the page.				
G.49 Helps turn pages.				
Manipulative Skills G.50 Pulls a string vertically to attain a toy.				

Please use this page to add your comments.

Date:				
	+/–	+/–	+/–	+/–
Problem Solving and Puzzles H.51 Lifts the lid from a small box to find a toy or raisin.				
H.52 Inverts a small bottle to obtain a raisin in imitation.				
15 to 18 months *Drawing* F.53 Scribbles spontaneously.				
Book Skills G.54 Turns pages of a cardboard book.				
G.55 Turns two or three pages of a paper book at a time.				
Problem Solving and Puzzles H.56 Puts a square in the formboard (no choice).				
H.57 Inverts a small bottle to obtain a raisin, no demonstration.				
Manipulative Skills E.58 Manipulates an object using both hands.				
18 months to 2 years *Matching and Sorting: Objects and Pictures* I.59 Matches identical objects (no choice).				
I.60 Matches identical objects, choice of two.				
Grasping B.61 Picks up pins or threads using a pincer grasp.				
Putting D.62 Builds a tower of six cubes.				
Drawing F.63 Imitates a vertical line.				
Book Skills G.64 Turns pages of a paper book singly.				

Please use this page to add your comments.

Date:				
	+/–	+/–	+/–	+/–
Problem Solving and Puzzles H.65 Puts together four nesting cups.				
H.66 Puts a triangle in the formboard (no choice).				
H.67 Puts a circle in the formboard, choice of three.				
H.68 Puts a square in the formboard, choice of three.				
H.69 Puts a triangle in the formboard, choice of three.				
Manipulative Skills E.70 Folds paper imitatively.				
E.71 Solves simple problems using tools.				
2 to 3 years *Problem Solving and Puzzles* H.72 Completes a one-piece puzzle.				
H.73 Completes a one-piece puzzle, six pieces removed.				
H.74 Completes a three-piece interlocking puzzle.				
H.75 Builds a train in imitation.				
H.76 Searches for the causal mechanism.				
Matching and Sorting: Objects and Pictures I.77 Matches objects to pictures, choice of two.				
I.78 Matches pictures, choice of two.				
I.79 Matches pictures, choice of four.				
I.80 Matches objects to pictures, choice of four.				

Please use this page to add your comments.

	Date:				
		+/–	+/–	+/–	+/–
Matching, Sorting and Selecting: Preacademics					
J.81	Gives one object on cue.				
J.82	Matches shapes, choice of three.				
J.83	Matches colours, choice of two.				
J.84	Matches colours, choice of two, four different colours.				
Drawing					
F.85	Imitates circular scribble.				
F.86	Imitates horizontal lines.				
F.87	Holds a crayon with the fingers.				
F.88	Makes controlled marks on paper.				
F.89	Imitates a circle.				
F.90	Copies a circle.				
Manipulative Skills					
E.91	Threads four large beads.				
E.92	Threads four medium beads.				
E.93	Snips with scissors.				
E.94	Unscrews threaded toys.				
E.95	Builds a six-block Duplo tower.				
Putting					
D.96	Builds a tower of eight cubes.				
D.97	Puts six small pegs in a pegboard.				
Book Skills					
G.98	Points to small features in picture books.				
G.99	Looks at books independently.				

Please use this page to add your comments.

Date:				
	+/−	+/−	+/−	+/−
3 to 4 years *Problem Solving and Puzzles* H.100 Completes a six-piece puzzle (unseen).				
H.101 Completes an eight-piece puzzle (unseen).				
H.102 Completes a four-piece jigsaw puzzle.				
H.103 Builds a bridge in imitation.				
H.104 Places five blocks in serial order.				
H.105 Makes a mechanical toy work, with no demonstration.				
Matching and Sorting: Objects and Pictures I.106 Matches picture cards, choice of nine.				
I.107 Sorts picture cards, choice of nine.				
Matching, Sorting and Selecting: Preacademics J.108 Selects three shapes.				
J.109 Matches colours, choice of four.				
J.110 Matches the colour pattern of four blocks.				
J.111 Sorts two sizes.				
J.112 Sorts three shapes.				
J.113 Sorts objects according to category.				
J.114 Pairs common objects by function.				
J.115 Selects colours, choice of four.				
J.116 Sorts colours, choice of four.				
J.117 Matches alphabet lotto, choice of six.				
J.118 Matches word lotto, choice of four.				

Please use this page to add your comments.

	Date:				
		+/−	+/−	+/−	+/−
Drawing					
F.119	Imitates a plus sign.				
F.120	Imitates a V shape.				
F.121	Copies a plus sign.				
F.122	Draws simple pictures.				
F.123	Colours in areas using templates.				
F.124	Paints shapes on large paper.				
F.125	Adds an arm or a leg to an incomplete man.				
F.126	Draws a person with at least three parts.				
Manipulative Skills					
E.127	Threads four small beads.				
E.128	Cuts across a 2 cm strip.				
E.129	Cuts a 10 cm square in two.				
E.130	Pastes a shape on the appropriate side; places on paper.				
E.131	Builds a simple Duplo shape, minimum six blocks.				

Please use this page to add your comments.

8–36

Receptive Language Checklist

Date:				
	+/–	+/–	+/–	+/–
0 to 3 months *Listening and Attending* A.1 Responds to sound with a startle or change in behaviour.				
A.2 Responds to voice with a startle or change in behaviour.				
A.3 Regards a face momentarily.				
A.4 Maintains facial contact (watches the speaker's eyes and mouth).				
A.5 Attends to surroundings by looking from one object to another.				
3 to 6 months *Listening and Attending* A.6 Searches for sound with eyes.				
A.7 Turns to sound (localises with eyes and head).				
A.8 Turns to voice (localises with eyes and head).				
6 to 9 months *Listening and Attending* A.9 Sits still in a chair and attends to a person or object.				
A.10 Looks at pictures or objects for two minutes with an adult.				
A.11 Changes facial expression in response to friendly or angry voices.				
Responding to Gestures and Simple Directions B.12 Changes facial expression in response to an adult's facial expression.				
B.13 Responds to simple requests when accompanied by gestures.				

Please use this page to add your comments.

	Date:				
		+/–	+/–	+/–	+/–
9 to 12 months					
Listening and Attending					
A.14	Listens to one person talk in a noisy environment.				
Responding to Gestures and Simple Directions					
B.15	Responds to own name by turning.				
B.16	Responds to firm directions by ceasing activity.				
B.17	Waves or claps on verbal direction.				
B.18	Locates familiar objects when named.				
B.19	Locates family members when named.				
12 to 15 months					
Choosing Between Alternatives: Objects and Pictures					
C.20	Chooses an object when named, choice of two.				
Responding to Gestures and Simple Directions					
B.21	Gives an object to the speaker when asked.				
B.22	Points to an object when named.				
15 to 18 months					
Choosing Between Alternatives: Objects and Pictures					
C.23	Points to distant objects out of doors.				
C.24	Chooses an object when named, choice of three.				
C.25	Points to one body part when named.				
Responding to Gestures and Simple Directions					
B.26	Follows one simple two-word or three-word direction.				
B.27	Follows three simple two-word or three-word directions.				
B.28	Brings a known object from another room when asked.				

Please use this page to add your comments.

Date:				
	+/–	+/–	+/–	+/–
18 months to 2 years *Responding to Directions Involving Action Words* D.29 Given one object, carries out two different actions when asked.				
D.30 Given one object, carries out three different actions when asked.				
Choosing Between Alternatives: Objects and Pictures C.31 Points to four body parts when named.				
C.32 Chooses an object when named, choice of four.				
C.33 Chooses three items of clothing when named.				
C.34 Chooses a picture when named, choice of two.				
C.35 Chooses a picture when named, choice of four.				
C.36 Points to seven body parts when named.				
Listening and Attending A.37 Listens to a complete short story.				
2 to 3 years *Responding to Directions Involving Action Words* D.38 Demonstrates 10 action words.				
D.39 Follows two-word directions, choice of two objects and three actions.				
D.40 Follows two-word directions, choice of three objects and four actions.				
D.41 Follows two-word directions, choice of four objects and four actions.				
D.42 Follows two-word directions involving two actions and two objects within each direction.				

Please use this page to add your comments.

Date:				
	+/−	+/−	+/−	+/−
Choosing Between Alternatives: Objects and Pictures C.43 Points to 10 body parts when named.				
C.44 Points to self when asked 'Where's . . .?'				
C.45 Chooses a picture when named, choice of nine.				
C.46 Points to two objects when described by function, choice of four.				
C.47 Points to four objects when described by function, choice of six.				
C.48 Points to six objects when described by function, choice of six.				
C.49 Shown five different food items, selects three when named.				
C.50 Shown five different animals, selects three when named.				
C.51 Shown five different furniture items, selects three when named.				
C.52 Responds to 'Give me . . . AND . . .', choice of four objects.				
C.53 Responds to 'Bring me . . . AND . . .', from anywhere in the room.				
Responding to Directions Involving Attribute Words E.54 Selects *big*, choice of big and little.				
E.55 Selects *little*, choice of big and little.				
E.56 Selects on basis of size, given two pairs of objects.				
Responding to Directions Involving Location Words F.57 Places an object *on* and *under* an upturned cup when asked.				
F.58 Places an object *in* a receptacle when asked.				
F.59 Takes an object *out of* a receptacle when asked.				
F.60 Places an object *in*, *on*, *under* when asked.				

Please use this page to add your comments.

Date:				
	+/–	+/–	+/–	+/–
Responding to Grammatical Features G.61 Discriminates regular plurals.				
G.62 Discriminates possessive forms.				
G.63 Discriminates 'not', shown two objects.				
Listening and Attending A.64 Attends to a story for 10 minutes, one to one.				
3 to 4 years *Responding to Directions Involving Action Words* D.65 Follows directions involving two actions and two objects within each direction, anywhere in the room.				
D.66 Follows directions involving three actions and three objects within each direction, anywhere in the room.				
Choosing Between Alternatives: Objects and Pictures C.67 Points to 13 body parts.				
C.68 Points to 16 body parts.				
C.69 Selects a boy and a girl, when shown pictures of both.				
C.70 Selects a man and a woman, when shown pictures of both.				
C.71 Selects objects according to category — food.				
C.72 Selects objects according to category — animals.				
C.73 Selects objects according to category — clothes.				
C.74 Selects objects according to category — furniture.				

Please use this page to add your comments.

		Date:			
		+/–	+/–	+/–	+/–
Responding to Directions Involving Attribute Words					
E.75	Selects *long* and *short*.				
E.76	Selects *hard* and *soft*.				
E.77	Selects *rough* and *smooth*.				
E.78	Selects *open* and *shut*.				
E.79	Answers or demonstrates: 'What do you do when you're *cold/tired/hungry*?'				
E.80	Selects members of a group that are *the same*.				
E.81	Selects the member of a group that is *different*.				
E.82	Selects or demonstrates *happy, sad, angry*.				
E.83	Selects *bigger* and *smaller*.				
E.84	Selects *first* and *last*.				
Responding to Directions Involving Location Words					
F.85	Places an object *in front of/behind* another when asked.				
F.86	Places an object *beside/away from* another when asked.				
F.87	Given an upturned cup, places an object *in front of, behind, beside, away from, on* and *under* when asked.				
Responding to Grammatical Features					
G.88	Discriminates 'not', shown two pictures of actions.				
G.89	Discriminates 'not' with attributes.				
G.90	Discriminates pronouns — him, her, me, you.				
Listening and Attending					
A.91	Answers simple questions, verbally or by pointing, during a story.				

Please use this page to add your comments.

Personal and Social Checklist

	Date:				
		+/–	+/–	+/–	+/–
0 to 3 months					
Socialisation and Play					
A.1	Quietens when picked up.				
A.2	Regards a face momentarily.				
A.3	Smiles or vocalises to talk or touch.				
3 to 6 months					
Socialisation and Play					
A.4	Brings hand to mouth holding a toy or object.				
A.5	Anticipates being lifted by moving arms or legs, lifting head, etc.				
A.6	Smiles spontaneously.				
A.7	Holds out arms to be picked up.				
A.8	Smiles at mirror image.				
A.9	Works for a toy out of reach.				
A.10	Laughs when head is covered by a cloth.				
Eating and Drinking					
B.11	Anticipates feeding upon sight of breast or bottle.				
B.12	Places hands on breast or bottle.				
B.13	Sucks and swallows puréed food.				
6 to 9 months					
Socialisation and Play					
A.14	Laughs at familiar games.				
A.15	Reacts to strangers by staring or crying.				
A.16	Plays with a variety of toys for 10 minutes.				

Please use this page to add your comments.

	Date:				
		+/–	+/–	+/–	+/–
Eating and Drinking					
B.17	Drinks from a cup with help.				
B.18	Gums and swallows textured food.				
B.19	Feeds self finger foods (biscuits, rusks, etc.).				
9 to 12 months					
Socialisation and Play					
A.20	Participates in peek-a-boo.				
A.21	Plays simple interactive games such as 'pat-a-cake' and 'this little pig' by holding out hand.				
A.22	Exhibits simple functional play such as putting a cup or spoon to the mouth.				
A.23	Plays ball by pushing the ball back to a parent.				
A.24	Plays alone — near an adult — for 15 to 20 minutes.				
Eating and Drinking					
B.25	Picks up and eats small finger foods.				
B.26	Holds a spoon, attempts to put food in the mouth.				
B.27	Bites and chews a biscuit.				
B.28	Eats mashed table foods.				
12 to 15 months					
Eating and Drinking					
B.29	Drinks unaided but spills often.				
B.30	Feeds self with a spoon, spills often.				
B.31	Chews normal table foods (cut up only).				
Dressing					
C.32	Pulls off a sock or hat.				

Please use this page to add your comments.

	Date:				
		+/–	+/–	+/–	+/–
Socialisation and Play					
A.33	Throws toys often in play or to reject.				
A.34	'Shows off' to gain adult attention.				
A.35	Gives or shows a toy to an adult.				
15 to 18 months					
Dressing					
C.36	Co-operates in dressing by moving limbs.				
C.37	Puts on a hat.				
Socialisation and Play					
A.38	Turns a picture or book to the appropriate side if presented upside down or back to front.				
A.39	Imitates housework.				
A.40	Exhibits extended functional play.				
18 months to 2 years					
Eating and Drinking					
B.41	Drinks from a cup without spilling.				
B.42	Spoon-feeds without spilling.				
Toileting					
D.43	Has bowel control.				
D.44	Is dry during the day fairly consistently.				
Dressing					
C.45	Takes off pants.				
Socialisation and Play					
A.46	Interacts with peers using gestures.				
A.47	Engages in parallel play; observes other children.				
A.48	Defends possessions.				

Please use this page to add your comments.

	Date:				
		+/−	+/−	+/−	+/−
2 to 3 years					
Socialisation and Play					
A.49	Engages in domestic make-believe play.				
A.50	Plays near children and occasionally interacts.				
A.51	Helps in simple household tasks.				
A.52	Co-operates with adult requests 50% of the time.				
A.53	Makes a choice when asked.				
A.54	Takes turns under adult direction.				
A.55	Attends to music or a story for 10 minutes in a group.				
A.56	Says 'please' with a reminder.				
A.57	Joins in songs or rhymes.				
A.58	Separates from mother without crying.				
Eating and Drinking					
B.59	Sucks liquid using a straw.				
B.60	Uses a fork to pierce food.				
Dressing					
C.61	Puts on socks.				
C.62	Puts on shoes.				
C.63	Puts on pants.				
C.64	Takes off a singlet or T-shirt.				
C.65	Unzips a zipper.				

Please use this page to add your comments.

	Date:				
		+/−	+/−	+/−	+/−
Toileting					
D.66	Indicates toilet needs by gestures.				
D.67	Verbalises toilet needs.				
D.68	Pulls down pants at toilet independently.				
D.69	Uses the toilet with adult direction.				
Washing and Grooming					
E.70	Washes own arms and legs.				
E.71	Washes and dries hands with help.				
E.72	Uses a toothbrush with adult assistance.				
3 to 4 years					
Socialisation and Play					
A.73	Follows rules in a group game led by an adult.				
A.74	Takes turns with other children.				
A.75	Plays near and talks with other children.				
A.76	Plays interactively with other children for 50% of playtime.				
A.77	Says 'please' and 'thank you' 50% of the time with no reminder.				
A.78	Co-operates with adult requests 75% of the time.				
A.79	Tells sex in response to a question.				
A.80	Performs simple chores.				
A.81	Avoids hazards.				
A.82	Stays within physical boundaries set by the parent.				
A.83	Shares adult attention with others.				

Please use this page to add your comments.

	Date:				
		+/−	+/−	+/−	+/−
Eating and Drinking					
B.84	Eats with a fork and spoon.				
B.85	Pours from a jug without spilling.				
Dressing					
C.86	Puts on a jumper or T-shirt.				
C.87	Puts on a shirt.				
C.88	Puts on a dress or long pants.				
C.89	Unbuttons large buttons.				
C.90	Buttons large buttons.				
C.91	Undresses completely.				
C.92	Dresses completely, with supervision.				
C.93	Fastens press studs.				
Toileting					
D.94	Is dry through the night.				
D.95	Wipes self when directed.				
D.96	Flushes the toilet when directed.				
D.97	Goes to the toilet independently when directed.				
Washing and Grooming					
E.98	Cleans teeth with verbal directions.				
E.99	Wipes nose with no reminder.				
E.100	Washes face and hands unaided.				

Please use this page to add your comments.

Summary of Communication Checklists

On the following pages you will find a summary of the checklists used in the assessment of communication skills. Details of all the communication skills and examples of each are given in Book 3, Chapters 2 and 3.

When you assess your child, use the full checklists in Book 3, Chapters 2 and 3.

You can, if you wish, use the summaries that follow to keep a profile of your child's progress over time.

Once you have completed your assessment, fill in the profile sheets like this:

- For each item in the profile, shade the relevant box as follows:
  - ■ if your child needs no further teaching at this level
  - ◩ if your child is currently working on objectives at this level
  - ☐ (leave blank) if your child is not yet ready to work at this level.

For grammatical features (Checklist 3.6) record the total number of different grammatical features your child is using after each assessment.

PROFILE: PREVERBAL COMMUNICATION SKILLS

Important: Before completing this profile, refer to the full checklists in Book 3, Chapter 2.

	Date	Date	Date	Date
2.1: Attending Skills 1	☐	☐	☐	☐
2.2: Attending Skills 2	☐	☐	☐	☐
2.3: Turn-taking	☐	☐	☐	☐
2.4: Imitation				
Actions	☐	☐	☐	☐
Facial movements	☐	☐	☐	☐
Sounds	☐	☐	☐	☐
2.5: Your Child's Uses of Preverbal Communication Skills				
Greeting	☐	☐	☐	☐
Farewelling	☐	☐	☐	☐
Sharing information	☐	☐	☐	☐
Giving objects	☐	☐	☐	☐
Giving services	☐	☐	☐	☐
Demanding objects	☐	☐	☐	☐
Demanding services	☐	☐	☐	☐
Rejecting objects	☐	☐	☐	☐
Rejecting services	☐	☐	☐	☐
Rejecting information	☐	☐	☐	☐
Innovating	☐	☐	☐	☐
Practising	☐	☐	☐	☐

Please use this page to add your comments.

PROFILE: VERBAL COMMUNICATION: YOUR CHILD'S USES OF LANGUAGE

Important: Before completing this profile, refer to the full checklists in Book 3, Chapter 3.

3.1: Your Child's Uses of Language: Single Words

	Date	Date	Date	Date
Greets and farewells	☐	☐	☐	☐
Requests objects	☐	☐	☐	☐
Requests services	☐	☐	☐	☐
Requests information	☐	☐	☐	☐
Rejects objects	☐	☐	☐	☐
Rejects services	☐	☐	☐	☐
Rejects information	☐	☐	☐	☐
Gives objects	☐	☐	☐	☐
Gives services	☐	☐	☐	☐
Gives information	☐	☐	☐	☐
Innovates	☐	☐	☐	☐
Practises	☐	☐	☐	☐
Initiates	☐	☐	☐	☐
Follows up	☐	☐	☐	☐

3.2: Your Child's Uses of Language: Phrases

Greets and farewells	☐	☐	☐	☐
Requests objects	☐	☐	☐	☐
Requests services	☐	☐	☐	☐
Requests information	☐	☐	☐	☐
Rejects objects	☐	☐	☐	☐
Rejects services	☐	☐	☐	☐
Rejects information	☐	☐	☐	☐
Gives objects	☐	☐	☐	☐
Gives services	☐	☐	☐	☐
Gives shared information	☐	☐	☐	☐
Gives new information	☐	☐	☐	☐
Innovates	☐	☐	☐	☐
Comments	☐	☐	☐	☐
Initiates	☐	☐	☐	☐
Follows up	☐	☐	☐	☐

Please use this page to add your comments.

PROFILE: VERBAL COMMUNICATION: THE MEANINGS YOUR CHILD CAN EXPRESS

Important: Before completing this profile, refer to the full checklists in Book 3, Chapter 3.

	Date	Date	Date	Date
3.3: The Meanings Your Child Can Express: Single Words				
Naming words	☐	☐	☐	☐
Action words	☐	☐	☐	☐
Negation words	☐	☐	☐	☐
Location words	☐	☐	☐	☐
Recurrence words	☐	☐	☐	☐
3.4: The Meanings Your Child Can Express: Two-Word Phrases				
Agent + action phrases	☐	☐	☐	☐
Action + object phrases	☐	☐	☐	☐
Negation phrases	☐	☐	☐	☐
Recurrence phrases	☐	☐	☐	☐
Location phrases	☐	☐	☐	☐
Demonstrative phrases	☐	☐	☐	☐
Attribute phrases	☐	☐	☐	☐
Possession phrases	☐	☐	☐	☐
3.5: The Meanings Your Child Can Express: Three-Word Phrases (or more)				
Agent + action + object phrases	☐	☐	☐	☐
Location phrases	☐	☐	☐	☐
Recurrence phrases	☐	☐	☐	☐
Negation phrases	☐	☐	☐	☐
Attribute phrases	☐	☐	☐	☐
Demonstrative phrases	☐	☐	☐	☐
'Wh' questions	☐	☐	☐	☐
Yes/no questions	☐	☐	☐	☐
3.6: Grammatical Features				
For each assessment record the total number of different grammatical features used by your child.	—	—	—	—

Please use this page to add your comments.

Small Steps is an Early Intervention Program for young children with developmental delays. The kit consists of eight books, and an optional videotape program.

Book 1: Introduction to Small Steps
This introductory book presents the background to Small Steps, and suggests ways in which it can be used.

Book 2: Your Child's Program
This book explains how to select goals for the individual child, and how to help the child achieve these goals in the context of family life.

Book 3: Communication Skills
This book is concerned with language learning, at both the preverbal and verbal levels. Language is seen in the context of social interaction, and skills are taught through play and 'everyday' activities.

Book 4: Gross Motor Skills
This book presents the skills which involve the large muscles of the body. These enable a child to sit, crawl, walk, climb, catch a ball and so on. It has been prepared by physiotherapists experienced with young children with disabilities.

Book 5: Fine Motor Skills
Fine Motor skills use the small muscles of the hand and eye. They range from the baby's first grasp of the parent's finger to complex skills such as drawing and cutting. Also included are problem-solving skills and the development of concepts such as colour, shape and size.

Book 6: Receptive Language Skills
Receptive Language skills involve the understanding of the language of others. They enable a child to attend to what others are saying, to follow directions and, most importantly, to use language him or herself.

Book 7: Personal and Social Skills
In this book we look at skills that help children to relate to others, to play and to achieve independence in eating, toileting, dressing and grooming.

Book 8: Developmental Skills Inventory
The D.S.I. draws together the individual parts of Small Steps. It is a series of checklists used for assessing the child and as a guide for setting objectives.

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